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A Study of Family Desertion

By

EARLE EDWARD EUBANK, Ph. D.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
CITY OF CHICAGO

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EARLE EDWARD EUBANK, Ph. D.
(University of Chicago)

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PREFACE.

The following study of family desertion is considered in no sense a final word upon the subject. It has been rather an attempt to outline some of its more salient features, in a way which will make further study profitable and possible. It is hoped that sufficient interest may be found in it to incite other students to other investigations more far-reaching and searching than this has been.

The generous co-operation of many persons and organizations has made the monograph possible:

The Department of Public Welfare of the City of Chicago has furnished the staff of investigators for the collection of material and financed its publication.

The United Charities of Chicago, and especially the Stock Yards District of that organization, has provided the bulk of the case material upon which the analysis is based. The Juvenile Protective Association has allowed the free use of its unpublished digest of two hundred cases from the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations; and that court itself has opened for study several hundred additional records. The Social Service Registration Bureau has afforded invaluable assistance in clearing particular cases; and the files of numerous other welfare agencies have been opened wide to furnish special data. It is not possible to mention by name all who have assisted, but specific credit is given throughout to whatever sources of information have been drawn upon. Public recognition must be made, however, of the valuable personal assistance rendered at various stages of the work by Mr. Ralph J. Reed, Superintendent of the Stock Yards District of the Chicago United Charities; Mr. Clarence D. Blachly, former Superintendent of the Bureau of Social Surveys of the Chicago Department of Public Welfare; and Miss Valeria D. McDermott of the same bureau. Important information upon the legislative phases of desertion has been supplied by Mr. Wm. H. Baldwin of Washington, D. C. The manuscript has been read by Mr. Eugene T. Lies, General Superintendent of the Chicago United Charities, who has made valuable criticisms and suggestions .

If the chapters to follow prove valuable in any degree, their worth is due largely to the constant, unselfish and discriminating supervision which they have received during their preparation from Dr. Robert E. Park, of the University of Chicago, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.

Numberless hours of devoted labor have been bestowed upon these pages by my wife. They would not have been possible at all without the quiet inspiration of her presence.

Earle E. Eubank.

University of Chicago,
June 6, 1916.

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"If the family, or rather the home, is in any considerable degree to social science what the atom is to physics and the cell is to biology, it is almost inevitable that social science must follow the method of those sciences so far at least as to concentrate attention on its study and discover that the home contains within it the great secret of all the social sciences. Indeed if this be true, the problems of the several social sciences themselves depend on this work for the home. Especially is it true of the problems of government, economics, religion and pedagogy, that they all need a scientific knowledge of the home as an indispensable condition of their solution."—S. W. Dike, "The Problem of the Family," *Congress of Arts and Sciences, 1904*, VII, 721.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction

1—THE FAMILY AS A SUBJECT FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDY.

Today, as truly as in times past, the family is the "principal social factor" in the life of man. Within it are combined activities which have as their end "the one general functon of preserving the physical and psychical continuity of the race."[1] It is thus a biological fact before it becomes, with the sanction of formal marriage, a social institution.

Although the family is the most ancient of social organizations it is one of the latest to be made the subject of scientific analysis and investigation. It has escaped until recent years the searching inquiries which science is accustomed to make into physical phenomena. Whether this has been due to its very nearness, which has caused it to be overlooked as a subject for study, or to its intimate and tender associations which make scientific investigations seem akin to sacrilege, or whether the state of public opinion has been responsible for a reluctance to meddle with the delicate questions which its relations involve, it has until lately been comparatively immune from analysis and criticism.[2]

As recently as a quarter of a century ago Dr. S. W. Dike felt the importance of calling attention to the fact that the family *as an institution* was at that time scarcely recognized.

> "It is not easy to find the term 'family' in national or state constitutions. It is by no means frequent on our statute books. Indeed the title has found is way into the encyclopedias only in recent years. We have come at the family in fragments and legislated accordingly. Our ideas of it are extremely individualistic, and so we are dominated by the conception of marriage as a mere contract, with little thought of the family and relations of status."[3]

Even those important writers who touched upon the subject of the family did not undertake to consider it in its modern aspects nor in any relation to current problems. As early as 1851 Sir Henry Maine and Bachofen had written of the family. Later came the works of Spencer, Morgan, Lubbock, McLennan, Hearn, Lyall, de Coulanges, Starcke, Westermarck and others, but

> "all these dealt more or less directly with the family but in ancient or early types of society. Still there was no study of the family in any of our higher educational institutions. There was no book on the family in the English language prior to 1880."[4]

It has been left almost to our own generation to discover the significance of the family *as a whole*, and to consider it in its vital relations to law, education, economics and morality. That the past two or three decades have seen a marked change in the popular attitude toward the family is due, partly at least, to the fact that the machinery of family life does not seem of late years to be working as smoothly as it should.[5]

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1. Small and Vincent, *Introduction to the Study of Society*, p. 250.

2. W. Goodsell, *The Family as a Social and Educational Institution*, p. 2.

3. S. W. Dike, "Problems of the Family," *Century Magazine*, XXXIX (1889), 393.

4. S. W. Dike, "The Problem of the Family," *Congress of Arts and Sciences*, 1904, VII, 712.

5. "It is mainly in recent years that the family as an institution has attracted the attention of the thinker and historian. It is so intimate a part of life, so inseparable from existence in all normal communities, that, like the air we breathe, it eludes observation, and we only notice it when something goes wrong." Helen Bosanquet, *The Family*, p. 7.

"The increase almost everywhere throughout the civilized world of the rate of divorce and the immense volume of it in the United States, the decrease of the marriage rate, and the postponement of marriage, the prevalence of unchastity and the lightness with which its offenses are regarded, the decrease of the birth-rate among those best fitted by their own training and resources to rear large families, the growing self-assertion of youth, and the lessened power of the home over character, have combined to bring the family to the front as one of the most vital subjects for practical consideration."[1]

The significance of manifestations such as the ones mentioned lies in the fact that they are indicative of important changes which the nature of the family is experiencing. Whether we approve or not, we are continually being made aware that under the influence of changing social and economic conditions the character of the family is undergoing a marked modification. In many ways a process of disintegration is going on and the cohesive elements in its structure are becoming less powerful. The stability of the home seems to be less than it has been in the past, and the result, in many instances, is the complete breaking down of the family itself.

This latter day tendency toward family disintegration is not merely an interesting fact. A large importance lies in the intimate relation of the family to other social institutions and phenomena. Any alteration in the family must of necessity profoundly affect them.

"The relation of the home as a social unity, to poverty, crime, intemperance and other vice, is worthy of the search of the statistician under the direction of social science. The composition of the family, its housing, its relation to the industry of its members and society, its influence in supplying the saloon, the brothel, the almshouse and the prison with victims, or in resisting the allurements of these places of vice, as well as its own sufferings from them, are subjects of pressing importance."[2]

Family desertion is one of the ways in which the dissolution of the bonds which unite the members of the family manifests itself. Like divorce, it is a problem of the disintegration of the family. When it occurs the physical union which is the biological basis of marriage is terminated; the economic organization of the family whereby it normally maintains itself as an independent group is disturbed, and readjustment is necessitated for the provision of those who are left without support; the ties of affection and sentiment which have given greatest strength and most complete unity to the family group are broken down.

In the United States especially desertion is increasingly forcing itself upon public attention. The object of the present monograph is to analyze the conditions out of which it arises and if possible to discern the causes. Desertion is to be considered as one of the forms of family disintegration. What is its extent? What are its characteristics? In what variety of ways does it find expression? What is its social significance, and in what ways does it appear to be a complicating factor in questions of dependency, delinquency and immorality? What measures in the past have been employed in dealing with it? What practical conclusions may be deduced concerning its social treatment? These are some of the outstanding matters which will be considered.

2—DESERTION A PHENOMENON COMMON TO THE FAMILY.

A.—Desertion Common to all Parts of the World.

The desertion of families is not a manifestation peculiar to American society. Eighteen countries besides our own have specifically recognized its existence

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1. S. W. Dike, "The Problems of the Family," *Congress of Arts and Sciences*, 1904, VII, 709.

2. S. W. Dike, "Problems of the Family," *Century Magazine*, XXXIX (1889), 386.

to the extent of making it a ground for divorce. In five others it is accepted as a ground for legal separation.[1]

Nor is desertion confined to civilized society. We are told by missionaries and others who have lived with primitive peoples that it is not an uncommon occurrence among them.[2]

B—Desertion Manifested in all Periods of History.

Neither is desertion a manifestation peculiar to present day society. It's presence has long been recognized even though it has not been studied.

As early as 1685 desertion began to be recognized as a problem in the American colonies, and the record of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations contains the following language:

> "Whereas severall complaints have been made to the Generall Assembly of this Colony by several women concerning their husbands deserting them and so absenting themselves, not only to neglect providing for them, but also they cannot be heard from, which matters if not timely prevented, may give occasions for persons to break forth to the committing of folly, who otherwise might live honestly amongst their neighbors: for the preventing of such miscarriages let it be enacted by this Assembly and by the authority thereof, that if either husband or wife have or shall so desert their husband or wife, that they cannot be heard of in five years' time after their departure of said husband or wife, the said husband or wife shall be free from their said husband or wife. Only it is provided, that foreasmuch as a negative cannot otherwise be made to appear, therefore the person, be it husband or wife that expects relief, shall positively give their engagement, together with the circumstances agreeing before a Court, that they have not heard from their said husband or wife so absenting themselves five years' time as aforesaid, whereupon the absent party shall be deemed as dead, and therefore the grieved party be released; anything to the contrary in any wise, notwithstanding.
>
> John Greene, Clerke,
> Oct. 30, 1685. per John Sanford, Recorder." [3]

That the mother country had recognized this as a national question long before is shown by her Poor Laws of 1609:

> "And for that many wilful people, finding that they have children, have some hope to have relief from the parish wherein they dwell, and being able to labour, and thereby to relieve themselves and their families, do nevertheless run away out of their parishes and leave their families upon the parish; (2) for remedy whereof, be it further enacted by this present parliament, and authority of the same, That all such persons so running away shall be deemed to incorrigible rogues: (3) and if either such man or woman, being able to work, and shall threaten to run away and leave their

---

1. *Countries where desertion is ground for divorce:* Argentine Republic; Australia (Victoria and New South Wales only); Austria; Bulgaria; Denmark; France ("injures graves" in the French law is interpreted to cover wilful desertion. *Vide*, E. Glasson, "Divorce," *Le grande encyclopédie*, XIV, 757); Germany; Greece; Hungary (including Croatia and Slavonia); Japan; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Russia (in Finland, and for Lutherans in Russia proper); Scotland; Servia; Sweden; Switzerland.
Countries where desertion is ground for legal separation: Canada (Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec); England and Wales; Ireland; Italy; Mexico.
(This statement compiled from *U. S. Special Census Report: Marriage and Divorce*, 1867-1906, I, and from Hyacinthe Ringrose, *Marriage and Divorce Laws of the World.*)

2. Among primitives, however, it is usually the woman who deserts, driven by desire to escape from the toil or abuse imposed on her by the man. The husband does not desert because the woman's ability to work and to bear children is an economic asset from which he does not desire to run away. If she is no longer valuable to him in these ways, or if he wearies of her, primitive law and custom permit him to divorce her.
In early society in general the right of divorce was given to man before it was conceded to woman. For this reason divorce was then more commonly the husband's method of obtaining release if it was desired, and desertion that of the wife.

3. *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, 1678-1706, III, 181-82. Edited (1858) by John Russell Bartlett, Secretary of State.

families as aforesaid, the same being proved by two sufficient witnesses upon oath, before two justices of peace in that division; that the said persons so threatening shall by the said justices of peace be sent to the houses of correction, (unless he or she can put in sufficient sureties for the discharge of the parish) there to be dealt with and detained as a sturdy and wandering rogue, and to be delivered at the said assembly or meeting, or at the quarter-sessions, and not otherwise."[1]

But desertion, and laws against desertion, were in existence long before our era, as is revealed by an examination of the great legislative codes of the ancient world.

The Sacred Laws of the Âryas, at least two or three and possibly six centuries before the Christian era, were specific on the point. In *Âpastamba's Aphorisms on the Sacred Law* we read:

"He who has unjustly forsaken his wife shall put on an ass's skin, with the hair turned outside, and beg in seven houses saying 'Give alms to him who forsook his wife.' That shall be his livelihood for six months.

"But if a wife forsakes her husband she shall perform the twelve-night Krikkhra penance for as long a time."[2]

Again, in the *Institutes of Vishnu:*

"(Abandoning) one's holy fire, or one's father, mother, son or wife * * * such criminals in the fourth degree shall perform the Kândrâyana or Parâka penances, or shall sacrifice a cow (as the case may require)."[3]

Again, in the *Vasistha Dharmâsastra:*

"A wife (though) tainted by sin, whether she be quarrelsome or have left a house or have suffered criminal force, or have fallen into the hands of thieves, must not be abandoned; to forsake her is not prescribed (by sacred law)."[4]

Again, in the *Laws of Manu:*

"To a Bramana (householder), or to an ascetic who comes for food, he may with the permission of (his) Bramana (guests), show honor according to his ability.

"Let him mix all kinds of food together, sprinkle them with water, and put them, scattering them (on Kusa grass), down on the ground in front of (his guests), when they have finished the meal.

"The remnant (in the dishes), and the portion scattered on Kusa grass, shall be the share of deceased (children) who receive not the sacrament (of cremation) and of those who (unjustly) forsook noble wives."[5]

Once more, from the *Minor Law Books:*

"Those must not be examined as witnesses who are interested in the suit, nor friends, nor associates, nor enemies, nor notorious offenders, nor persons tainted (with a heavy sin), * * * nor an atheist, nor a Vrâtya, nor one who has forsaken his wife or his fire."[6]

Most ancient of all recorded legislation in this field is that of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, who, approximately 2250 B. C. found this a sufficiently extensive evil to warrant a decree to the effect that a deserted wife might have the right to remarry:

1. The 7th James 1st Cap. 4, Sec. 8, as published in the *English Statutes at Large,* VII, 225-26. Edited by Danby Pickering.

2. *The Sacred Books of the East,* II, 89, Secs. 19 and 20. Edited by F. Max Müller. (Translation by Georg. Bühler.)

3. *Ibid.,* VII, 135, 138, Secs. 6 and 35. (Translation by Julius Jolly.)

4. *Ibid.,* XIV, 133, Secs. 2 and 3.

5. *Ibid.,* XXV, 120, Secs. 243, 244 and 245. (Translated by Georg. Bühler.)

6. *Ibid.,* XXXIII, 86-87, Secs. 177 and 180. (Translation by Julius Jolly.) In this same category of those who must not be allowed to serve as witnesses in a trial, included with wife deserters are such persons as these: Slaves, imposters, drunken men, madmen, eunuchs, poisoners, weather-prophets, malicious persons, betrayers of friends, forgers, quacks, etc.

"If a man desert his city and flee and afterward his wife enter into another house; if that man return and would take his wife, the wife of the fugitive shall not return because he hated his city and fled." [1]

Although the rate of desertion will vary from time to time and from place to place its extensiveness and persistence as indicated in the foregoing records lead to the conclusion that it is a well nigh universal phenomenon. It indicates that desertion is as old as the family and co-extensive with it, and that it springs out of its very nature, from the friction and conflict of opinions and interests inevitably engendered in the intimacy of the family relation itself.

3—SOURCES OF MATERIAL.

The sources of information for the study of desertion are very meagre.

Only of late has there been the possibility of studying any phase of the family scientifically on an extensive scale. Before the introduction of a system of social statistics—a step taken almost within our memory—it was impossible for a community to investigate disinterestedly and over a wide area the conditions and modifications of family life.[2] Until recent years we have been disposed to regard the union of man and wife as a matter of private contract, and consequently have dealt with the individuals composing the family on an individualistic basis.

The first serious attempt in this country to study the relations of the family on a large scale was made by Hon. Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor. In 1889 under his direction appeared *A Report on Marriage and Divorce in the United States, 1867-'86.* Two decades later appeared *A Special Report on Marriage and Divorce, 1867-1906,* by the Bureau of the Census, S. N. D. North, Director, which in addition to its own, incorporated the findings of the former report.

Much of the interest in the institution of the family now general throughout the country may be directly traced to the startling disclosures as to the rapid increase of divorce made by these reports. Since then a flood of literature which increases daily has been produced dealing with the family, and particularly with the matter of divorce.

The interest in family desertion is of more recent date. Until recent years it has not presented itself to students of social life as a problem that could be isolated, and so dealt with and studied as a phenomenon distinct from divorce and legal separation for which it is so frequently offered as a ground.

The scanty information we possess has been secured primarily through charity organization societies and professional social workers. The work of organized charity is essentially with the institution of the family and with the individual as a member of a family. "Family rehabilitation" is the familiar term descriptive of the task of the charity worker. Where rehabilitation does not seem possible or where the family cannot furnish the special type of care that is required special institutions are provided to take the place of the family. Although the charities may not fully have recognized the fact in the past, and perhaps it is not yet generally recognized by the public, it is nevertheless true that the family is the starting point for practically every measure of social readjustment.[3]

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1. *The Code of Hammurabi,* Sec. 136. Harper's translation, p. 47.

2. *Vide,* W. D. Morrison, *Crime and Its Causes,* Chap. 1.

3. "In philanthropy we note a steadily growing recognition of the place of the home in social reform. The charitable institution where large numbers of children have been gathered for care has given place to the single home. For it has been found that the average home available for the care of destitute children is a more natural, and, therefore, a better place for the training of the child than the artificial life of a great caravansary. Poor relief is abandoning its former habit of reliance on the almshouse and the gift of money. It now seeks to keep the family together and to put the home on its own feet and to leave it to self-support. The use of social settlements in our cities tends strongly in the same direction. Indeed, it is almost a first principle of all expert charitable work now to make respect for the home and all possible use of its resources a cardinal principle of all philanthropic effort." S. W. Dike, "The Problem of the Family," *Congress of Arts and Sciences,* 1904, VII, 714-15.

Therefore it is to be expected that the facts concerning desertion should first of all attract attention and stimulate inquiry among those practically engaged in social welfare work. Among these the general opinion seems to prevail that desertion is increasing—this in spite of the fact that every state of the union has made desertion or non-support a criminal offense.[1]

> "Of the replies received to the question addressed to many charitable and humane societies throughout the country as to whether the evil (desertion) was decreasing or increasing, nine per cent declare that it is decreasing, twenty-seven per cent think it is stationary, while sixty-four per cent declare that it is increasing." [2]

Possibly it is this general impression that has led certain charities in recent years, particularly since 1900, to make a more clearly defined effort to understand desertion. A catalog of all definite studies in the field, however, is not extensive.

In 1901 appeared the first, Miss Zilpha D. Smith's *Deserted Wives and Deserting Husbands: a study of 234 families based on the experience of the district committees and agents of the Associated Charities of Boston.* This was prepared from one year's record of cases while Miss Smith was General Secretary of the Boston organization.

This was followed in 1902 by a study by a special committee appointed for the purpose, of 211 cases which came under the care of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity during that year.

In 1905 was published Miss Lillian Brandt's *Five Hundred and Seventy-four Deserters and their Families: a descriptive study of their characteristics and circumstances.* This differed from the former two in that it was not confined to the study of local cases, but was based on information obtained from twenty-six organizations in fifteen states.

Desertion has been a topic of discussion at four of the annual meetings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections: 1902, 1905, 1911 and 1912. At the second of these a report of a special committee, with resolutions, was adopted by the body.

The National Conference of Catholic Charities has had the subject under formal consideration once: in 1912.

The most practical consideration that the matter has received has been at the hands of the National Conference of Jewish Charities. Special committees appointed reported with specific recommendations at the meetings of the Conference in 1900 and 1906. In 1910 it was again taken up, this time being made the chief topic of treatment by the Conference. The establishment of the National Desertion Bureau February 1, 1911, with headquarters at New York City, was the outgrowth of this. The Bureau has published two valuable reports, the first in April, 1912, the second in November, 1915.

Desertion has been under consideration nineteen times by various state conferences of Charities and Correction.

Abroad the question has been made the subject of special study in the city of Glasgow, Scotland. It has been treated in a series of four pamphlets by Mr. James R. Motion, Inspector of the Poor and Clerk to the Parish Council of Glasgow, under dates of June, 1909, October, 1909, June, 1912, and February, 1913.

In addition to these sources of information, all of which have originated with charitable societies or conferences, is the special report of the Federal Census Office, already mentioned: *Marriage and Divorce, 1867-1906.* In this report are contained the only extensive statistics on desertion which have been compiled in this country. Because they are the most comprehensive figures available reference will be made to them in the pages to follow. For several reasons, however, they cannot be accepted at face value:

1. *Vide,* Wm. H. Baldwin, "The Present Status of Family Desertion and Non-support Laws," p. 2. Abstract appears in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction,* 1911, p. 406.

2. Wm. H. Baldwin, *op. cit.*

i. *They are incomplete.* They cover only those desertions where divorce action was taken in which desertion was given as the ground. Consequently no record is included of the vast number of desertions which have taken place with no attempt made to secure divorce.

ii. *They contain variations which may be due to other things than actual fluctuation in the desertion rate.*[1] (a) These may be due to difference in state laws. New York, for example, shows an extremely low percentage of desertion, because desertion is not admitted as a ground of divorce in that state. Other states having liberal laws attract a population which comes for the express purpose of securing divorce, and so have recorded a higher divorce rate than is properly theirs. Nevada is an example. (b) The existence of customs, traditions or ethical standards opposed to desertion will make for a lower rate. (c) Divorce will be lower where there is a large Roman Catholic population because their church forbids divorce for any cause, desertion included. (d) The desertion rate will be affected by unequal distribution of ethnic stocks due to immigration, which affects the divorce rate.

iii. *They may not always be statistics of bona fide desertions.* The author of the article on "Divorce" in the *New International Encyclopedia* calls attention to a fact which is common knowledge in divorce courts, viz., that desertion is the most easily and commonly abused of all grounds for divorce. Couples wishing to be released from matrimonial bonds in casting about for the most "respectable" ground upon which to base their petition frequently decide upon desertion. By collusion an apparent desertion may be affected which in reality does not exist, or which exists for the sole purpose of creating a technical case for the plaintiff. What the Federal statistics reveal, then, is not necessarily the number of times desertion has been a *cause* for divorce, but the number of times it has been alleged and accepted as a *legal ground* for divorce.

The studies which have been mentioned, together with special papers which have been published from time to time, constitute the secondary sources of the present study.

The primary sources have been the case records of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations, and concrete cases aided by the United Charities of Chicago.

The Chicago Court of Domestic Relations was started April 3, 1911, as a branch of the Municipal Court. Its business is to try all cases wherein are involved criminal breaches of domestic relations, one of its objects, as outlined originally by Judge Charles M. Goodnow is, "to inaugurate a system whereby delinquent deserters may be promptly compelled to support their wives and children, thus forcing the one upon whom that obligation rests to perform that duty and to relieve the charitable public of another burden."[2] The court has kept an individual record of the cases brought before it, and from these 327 desertions have been selected—those being chosen whose information seemed most complete—for the tabulation of statistical data concerning some of the characteristics of desertion in general.

Of these 327, two hundred are cases which representatives of the Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago have personally visited and studied. The material which they have obtained has not been published, and it is through the courtesy of that organization that a part of their information has been included in some of the tables which are to follow.

An intensive study has been made of the cases aided by the United Charities of Chicago. From the files of the Stock Yards District of this society more than six hundred families were taken, the cases which have come to their attention over a five year period. All of these have been visited personally by the visitors from the United Charities; many of them have been visited again in particular connection with this study. These are the cases which have fur-

1. Cf., J. P. Lichtenberger, *Divorce, a Study in Social Causation,* Chap. xiii.

2. From a statement prepared by Mrs. Gertrude Howe Britton, Superintendent of the Juvenile Protective Association, for the voters of Chicago, Sept. 30, 1914.

nished the concrete material for analysis. From them has been made the classification of desertion types, and they have afforded the bulk of the illustrative material used.[1]

In an attempt to get statistical material from as wide a range as possible letters were sent out to seventy charity organization societies of the leading cities of the United States and Canada, distributed among thirty-eight states and three provinces; and to twenty-four societies of fifteen countries abroad. Answers have been received from thirty-two American and six foreign societies. Letters were sent also to twenty Jewish charity organization societies of the United States; to the divorce courts of sixteen of the larger cities of the country; to the seven courts of domestic relations; and to twelve cities known to have departments of public outdoor relief.

In an attempt to locate every study and all literature to which the subject has given rise in the United States requests for co-operation—which have met with cordial response—were sent to the secretaries of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, and the thirty-three state conferences of Charities and Correction; to *The Survey;* the Russell Sage Foundation; the New York School of Philanthropy; The National Desertion Bureau; and to the leading social service agencies of Chicago.

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1. Charity cases have been selected as a basis for this study primarily because more cases are available among them, and because information concerning them is fuller than among families which are not under obligation to philanthropic societies. Much important information is obtainable from the record of the society before going to the family itself, for it has been previously recorded as part of the regular procedure of the society preliminary to giving relief. Being known personally, as these families are, to regular visitors of the society, information can be gathered from these officials in addition to that contained in the records. Finally, deserted families which have applied for charity and have become familiar with its inquiries are less apt to be suspicious or resentful of sympathetic investigation which is so essential to a study of this kind. Whatever conclusions respecting desertion may be reached in the following pages are therefore based mainly upon desertions which have occurred among the dependent classes, or among those whom desertion has thrown into dependency, and not upon cases where desertion is unaccompanied by dependency.

These latter would constitute a separate problem, and possibly some of the conclusions reached here would not apply there. At the present writing it does not appear how a study of such cases would be undertaken, nor what sources of material would appear.

In the words of Mr. Wm. H. Baldwin, "The interest of the public attaches by reason of the *non-support,* rather than the *absence* in the case of family desertion." It is to cases of this class which the following pages particularly devote themselves.

CHAPTER II.

Analysis of the Problem.

1—DESERTION A PROBLEM OF THE CITY.

Desertion as we know it, and insofar, at least, as it has been studied, is a problem of the city. General observation leads to the conclusion that it is more particularly an urban than a rural problem. Exact information upon this point is lacking, yet there is reason for the assumption.

As desertion is the most popular ground for divorce in the United States[1] we are justified in supposing that where there are more divorces there will be also more desertions included in the number except in those states which do not admit desertion as a legal ground, viz., New York, North Carolina, South Carolina (which does not grant divorce for any cause) and the District of Columbia. That divorce rates are higher in the city than in the country is shown to be highly probable by the tables prepared by the Federal Census Office. Excluding states having counties whose records were lacking or incomplete, twenty-eight states remained, including the District of Columbia, which permitted an accurate comparison between the divorce rate for city counties and other counties. The conclusions of the Census Office, based upon the tables, are expressed in the following words:

> "In all but three of the twenty-eight states shown in the table, the divorce rate in 1900 was greater in the city counties than in the other counties. The three exceptions were New York, Pennsylvania and Oregon. In New Jersey, Connecticut and Michigan, the excess of the rate in the city counties was comparatively slight, but in the remaining twenty-two states it was considerable, varying from 10 in Louisiana to 166 in Iowa. As a broad general statement, therefore, it may be safely said that the divorce rate in cities of at least 100,000 inhabitants is greater than it is in small cites and in country districts. The figures for the earlier decades suggest, moreover, that the divorce rate has always been higher in the large cities than in the smaller cities and country districts."[2]

Mr. W. F. Wilcox, one of the foremost authorities upon divorce in the United States, inclines to the same opinion.[3]

Not only is the divorce rate, as we are led to believe, absolutely higher in urban than in rural communities, but relatively it is higher still since the proportion of married persons in the adult population is lower in urban populations.[4]

Although no studies have been made in the United States of the relative frequency of divorce, desertion and family disintegration in general in the cities as compared with the rural regions, we find that the former far more than the latter supply conditions which seem likely to loosen family ties and to change

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1. Of 945,625 divorces granted in the United States from 1887 to 1906, 415,545, or 43.9 per cent, were on the ground of desertion or abandonment, and in 38.9 per cent this was the sole cause given. Cruelty ranks a distant second and was the sole cause given in only 18.5 per cent of the cases. *Special Reports of the United States Census Office: Marriage and Divorce,* 1867-1906, I, 81.

2. *Op. cit.,* I, 18-19.

3. "Divorce is probably especially frequent among the native population of the United States, and among these probably more common in the city than in the country. This statement cannot be established absolutely, since statistics afford no means of distinguishing the native from the foreign-born applicants. It is, however, the most obvious reason for explaining the fact that, while in Europe the city divorce rate is from three to five times as great as that of the surrounding country, the difference in the United States between the two regions is very much less. In other words, the great number of foreigners in American cities probably tends to obscure, by a low divorce rate [since they are predominantly Roman Catholic and so forbidden by the Church to obtain divorce], the high rate of the native population." *Encyclopedia Brittanica,* article on "Divorce."

4. Urban male, 54.7 per cent.; rural, 56.8 per cent. Urban female, 54.6 per cent.; rural, 63.3 per cent. *Abstract, Thirteenth Census of the United States,* 1910, p. 163.

the essential character of the domestic relation. Desertion is one of the results of domestic instability. We think of it today as peculiarly a problem of the city because of the numerous elements within the city which make for domestic instability.

(a) *In the city the restraint of the mores is less because of the absence of primary group attachments.*

> "To have an effective public opinion holding people to their duties it is important that men should live long in one place and in one group, inheriting traditional ideas and enforcing them upon one another. All breaking up of old associations involves an 'individualism' which is nowhere more active than in family relations." [1]
>
> "In small and rude communities every free man, or at best every head of a household, feels his own significance and realizes his own independence. * * * His will and action count for something in the affairs of the community he belongs to." [2]

In the smaller community residence is relatively permanent, a larger proportion of homes and property are owned; and by virtue of this fact neighborhoods come to acquire a fixed and recognized character which in a way attaches to the persons composing them.

> "The protection and care of a piece of property makes for thoughtfulness and steadiness, individualizes. * * * This property, so responsive to care or neglect, is a standing challenge to self-control. * * * The man owns his home, but in a sense his home owns him, checking his rash impulses, holding out of the human whirlpool." [3]

The fact of one's being comparatively fixed and identified with a given locality tends to establish a permanent relationship with the group. The existence of the individual is merged with that of the group in a personal and peculiar way. From month to month, from year to year he reacts upon and is reacted upon by the same set of more or less familiar acquaintances. He is mindful of their opinions and influenced by them as are they by his. Theirs is a *primary group*

> "characterized by intimate, face-to-face association and co-operation * * * fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualties in a common whole, so that the very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group." [4]

So long as the individual is a part of such a group he is bound by local attachments and restraints, governed and controlled by the *mores* of the group, in a way which he cannot ignore.[5]

> "The growth of cities has been accompanied by the substitution of indirect, 'secondary,' for face-to-face, 'primary' relationship in the associations of individuals in the community. * * * A very large part of the population of great cities, including those who make their homes in tenements and apartment houses, live much as people do in some great hotel, meeting but not knowing one another. The effect of this is to substitute fortuitous and casual relationship for the more intimate and permanent as-

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1. C. H. Cooley, *Social Organization,* pp. 369-70.
2. James Brice, *The American Commonwealth,* II, Chap. lxxxiv.
3. E. A. Ross, *Social Psychology,* p. 87.
4. C. H. Cooley, *op. cit.,* p. 15.
5. "Tout d'abord, puisque le souci de l'opinion publique est un traite caracteristique de notre nature, il est à remarquer qu'un cultivateur est beaucoup plus retenu qu'un ouvrier par la crainte du scandale. Dans les petites localités, où tout le monde se connait où chacun se prèoccupe de ce qui se passe chez son voisin, un procés en divorce prend l'importance d'un événement public. La population se divise en deux camps: celui de la femme et celui du mari et chacun des deux adversaires arrive à l'audience escorte de ses partisans. Dans les quartiers populeux d'une grande ville, au contraire, un pareil différend passe complètement inapercu et personne se sange, à l'atelier où à l'usine, a se préoccuper de la situation de famille de ses compagnons de travail." Auguste Rol, *L'Evolution du divorce,* pp. 467-68.

sociations of the smaller communities. * * * It is probably the breaking down of local attachments and the weakening of the restraints and inhibitions of the primary group under the influence of urban environment, which are largely responsible for the increase of vice and crime in great cities." [1]

(b) *In the city the size and mobility of population makes for anonymity of the individual, who finds in this a greater freedom to do as he pleases.* The majority of inhabitants dwell in quarters which they do not own,[2] paying rent to an impersonal landlord, and as a consequence acquire no sentiment of personal attachment for any particular locality as such. Removal to other residence quarters is easily and frequently accomplished, and a large part of the population is constantly on the move.

This constant shifting of the population prevents the formation of customs and traditions to serve as instruments of social control. Any conduct which might arouse local disapproval need not be inhibited on that account; one may easily go to a community where one is unknown. This is not difficult in the city where a removal of a very few blocks is often sufficient to place one in a neighborhood as entirely new and unrelated to the former one as if it were in fact another city.

"Another reason (why desertion is less common in Germany than in the United States) is that it is nearly impossible for anybody in Germany to disappear. You have to register with the local authorities whenever you change your residence. Furthermore, every man who is in some way connected with the army is bound to notify his regiment of every change of address. If he neglects this obligation he is punished as a 'deserter' under military law. Very few men like to take this risk. Consequently you can easily trace any man whose military affiliation you know. But men do not like to be traced this way." [3]

Released from the restraint which the intimate and personal relation of the smaller community enforces, lost to view in the throng of anonymous, unrelated and indifferent human beings which graze his elbows, the individual tends to give freer rein to an expression of his desires. Greater freedom is afforded to do as he pleases because there are fewer people to care what he does. Constant advertising of inviting fields in distant localities is before the urban dweller. Easy transportation makes going possible. The suggestion to depart comes to him in these ways which are not presented to the rural inhabitant.

"Not only transportation and communication, but the segregation of the urban population tends to facilitate the mobility of the individual man. The processes of segregation tend to establish moral distances which make the city a mosaic of little worlds which touch but do not interpenetrate. This makes it possible for individuals to pass quickly from one moral *milieu* to another and encourages the fascinating but dangerous experiment of living at the same time in several different contiguous, perhaps, but widely separated worlds. All this tends to give the city a superficial and

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1. Robert E. Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment," *American Journal of Sociology,* XX (March, 1915), 593, 595, 607-608.

2. A comparison of homes *owned* with homes *rented* in the five largest cities of the United States, as compared with the rest of the country, is given in the *Thirteenth Census of the United States,* 1910, I, 1295 and 1313:

City—	Homes Owned.	Homes Rented.
New York	11.7 per cent	88.3 per cent
Chicago	26.2 per cent	73.8 per cent
Philadelphia	26.6 per cent	73.4 per cent
Boston	11.1 per cent	88.9 per cent
St. Louis	25.0 per cent	75.0 per cent
United States (at large)	45.8 per cent	54.2 per cent
United States (farm homes)	62.8 per cent	37.2 per cent

3. Dr. Alix Westerkamp, letter, Feb. 28, 1916.

adventitious character; it tends to complicate social relationships and to produce new and divergent individual types. It introduces, at the same time, an element of chance and adventure which adds to the stimulus of city life and gives it for young and fresh nerves a peculiar attractiveness. The lure of great cities is perhaps a consequence of stimulations which act directly upon the reflexes. As a type of human behavior it may be explained, like the attraction of the flame for the moth, as a sort of tropism. * * * In the long run every individual finds somewhere among the varied manifestations of city life the sort of environment in which he expands and feels at ease; finds, in short, the moral climate in which his peculiar nature obtains the stimulation that brings his innate qualities to full and free expression."[1]

"The force of suggestion depends somewhat on *bodily and mental condition.* Fatigue, disease and 'nerves' lessen the powers of inhibition, while mob-madness [a characteristic of city life] leads men captive to the impressions of the moment."[2]

As a result, moral standards tend to break down. The wide difference between the environments within and without the city produce different evaluations. Family life, religion, certain ethical codes so completely accepted as to be taken for granted in the smaller community, may fall into utterly different perspective and become of minor importance amid city surroundings where the emphasis is altered. The very things which constitute the ideals of one sphere may become objects of near-contempt in another.

(c) *In the city the economic basis of family unity tends to disappear.*

"The typical family community is one which is held together by a common industry in which each member can partake, according to his strength or capacity; and the industry which most readily lends itself to the co-operation of a number of persons of different age or sex, is farming and the cultivation of the land. In it there is work for all capacities; the weakest can contribute something, the most stupid can give his strength, and the most able can find scope for his skill and organizing power. And so it becomes necessary to carry into industry the principle of family life, that each gives according to his powers and receives according to his needs. Moreover, and this is important for the question before us, this industrial unity of a family means that its members are stronger in combination than they would be apart. A real gain is effected by the assignment of work to those most fitted to do it, and thus there is a genuine economic force to hold the Family together."[3]

"On peut donc affirmer que la prospérite de la clase agricole est basée sur l'union étroite de tous les membres de la famille et que tout événement qui brise cette intimité porte atteinte au bien-être de tous."[4]

Rarely is this economic unity possible in large cities. Industrialism, which centres in cities, inevitably results in throwing the members of the family group into one of two classes: workers (usually wage-earners), or those economically dependent upon workers. The industrial co-operation of the rural family disappears. The business interest of the working members are diverse; unless they pool their wages in a common family fund their economic life has nothing of kinship. In the factory and commercial life of the city the workers have been "banded together into groups where the individuals are repetitions of each other instead of being complementary factors."[5]

"Le travail industrial * * * désagrège la famille. Il en disperse les membres et donne à chacun d'eux des préoccupations différentes et

1. Robert E. Park, *op. cit.*, p. 608.
2. E. A. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 147.
3. Helen Bosanquet, *The Family*, pp. 195-96.
4. Auguste Rol, *op. cit.*, p. 469.
5. Helen Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

des intérêts divers. Le mari, la femme, les enfants travaillent, presque toujours, dans des ateliers differents, le plus souvent pour des industries qui n'ont rein de commun entre elles. Ils se retrouvent le soir, et se quittent le lendemain. Ils n' ont pas une même but, ils n' emploient pas leur activité a une même oeuvre ou plutot, ils n' ont, pas de but, puisqu' ils ne sont point intéressès au succés de l' enterprise a laquelle ils collaborent. Le mari n' est pas le chef d' un groupe de travailleurs unis dans un même effort, la femme n' est pas, pour lui, une collaboratrice; ils ne sont que des associés pour la table et le logement, tout disposés à rompre le contrat qui les le, a la promière difficulté, et qu' aucun intérêt important ne retiendre quand leur amour-propre ou leur besoin d' independence serant en jeu."[1]

The destruction of the economic basis of domestic unity makes for family instability. If the woman, either through choice or necessity, leaves the home and becomes a wage-earner the husband's feeling of responsibility for providing for her may be lessened, and he may feel more at liberty to desert her should the impulse come than he otherwise would. The woman in turn, from the very fact of being economically independent, may be led to assert her independence in ways which will in themselves be provocative of household friction. At best she cannot work outside and at the same time keep up an attractive home.[2] Furthermore, there is no doubt that the entrance of women into wage-earning occupations before marriage tends to make them unfit for married life when they eventually assume its duties; and this in itself may contribute to domestic unhappiness. On the other hand, if the wife does not earn wages which will contribute to the household budget she will, in the city, be more of an economic burden on the man than she would in the country, because the expense of living is greater there.

"At one time marriage was, for women, about the only way to a respectable maintenance, while to men a good housewife was equally an economic necessity. * * * In the towns [now] the economic considerations are mostly opposed to married life. Besides making husband and wife less necessary to each other these changes tend to make women restless."[3]

Family arrangements may become less valuable to both because other interests are at hand to detract from the central importance of the home. They as individuals are less dependent upon it. Restaurants and hotels are at hand to accommodate domestic needs; saloons, lodges and clubs of various sorts minister to the interests of sociability; recreation and amusement are more satisfyingly provided by specialized devices for public entertainment than by the home itself. Even sexual desire does not depend for gratification upon a marital relation. The city vastly increases the opportunity for sexual adventure, and that at a time when the weakening of the domestic ties makes more easy an acquiescence to its allurements.

As the home gradually yields to outside agencies the right to minister to the various desires of its members—desires which formerly it was the home's especial prerogative to satisfy—its essential character slowly changes. The tendency is for the home of the city dweller to degenerate into a mere meeting place, to be used at the convenience of those who live at that particular address.

Not only does the family relation in all of these ways tend to become less necessary: by imposing its compelling demands between the individual and his personal desires it may become to him an unwelcome bondage, an obstacle between himself and things which he values more highly. It throws demands upon his time and purse which he may be selfish enough to resent.

If not a burden, a family is at least a luxury to the man who is in the city, as is borne out by the general attitude there toward married life. The lower marriage rate, the advanced age at marriage, the shrinkage in the size

1. Auguste Rol, *op. cit.*, pp. 469-70.

2. "It is certain that where the wife abandons the home for outside work or pleasure the bonds which hold the family together become of the slightest." Helen Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

3. C. H. Cooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-68.

of families[1] whatever other explanations therefor may be offered, at least testify to the fact that the possession of a family has become a more difficult matter than in the past.

In the smaller community the opposite of all this is true. Not only can a family be enjoyed at less sacrifice, financial and otherwise, but without a family a man is shut off from many creature comforts. It is essential to the highest satisfaction of his physical needs and without it many social satisfactions are denied. More than this, his fellows expect him to become a family man and he cannot remain a bachelor without disregarding the opinions of his group. Once in possession of a family he cannot voluntarily disassociate himself from it without defying public opinion, for this also is contrary to the *mores* of his group. Indeed, should domestic friction arise, he is far more like to adjust himself to the disagreeable situation and to "make the best of it" in the country than in the city for the very reason that the suggestion to escape his difficulty by deserting would scarcely reach him in a community where desertion is all but unknown.

(d) *The spirit of discontent characteristic of the city.*—Mr. Willcox, in his study of the divorce problem, refers to the "spread of discontent" that is manifesting itself in so many ways.[2]

That a spirit of discontent in general is abroad in the land is not to be doubted. That it is particularly characteristic of the city is likewise obvious. Lawlessness, crime, suicide, industrial conflict, restlessness and dissatisfaction in every field are more pronounced in the confusion of great cities. To the restless and discontented spirits of the city-reared, must be added those of the thousands who leave smaller places and seek the city because of dissatisfaction with their lot in the less pretentious locality. The dissatisfied go to the city. The places they leave are more quiet because of their departure; the city is more restless because they are added to it.

Desertion is one of the by-products of the spirit of discontent which is characteristic of the city.

2—DESERTION MORE FREQUENTLY MANIFESTED IN THE HUSBAND.

In this connection another point is pertinent: the husband is more frequently a deserter than is the wife. It is interesting to note that the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations makes no provision on its official record blanks for the woman as the deserter, but only for the man. "Defendant" versus "Wife" are the headings employed, suggestive of the fact that the defendant is almost invariably the man.

Of the five thousand charity cases which came under the care of the New York Charity Organization Society for the two years ending September 30, 1908, 499 were deserted women and fourteen were deserted men.[3] Of the 591 desertion histories submitted to Miss Lilian Brandt as a basis for her study in 1905, in only seventeen was the wife found to be the deserter.[4] Of the 1747 warrants issued during 1914 by the domestic relations courts of the Boroughs of Manhattan and The Bronx, only sixteen were for women.[5] Of the 9,065 de-

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1. Statistics show that wage-earners generally have fewer children than farmers. "C'est qu'un enfant est, pour eux, une lourde charge et que l'incertitude de leur situation ne leur permet même pas l'espoir de lui assurer un avenir. A la campagne, au contraire, une enfant est un précieux auxiliare. Des les premieres anneés de l'adolescence, il rend des services et collabore a l'oeuvre commune." Auguste Rol, *op cit.*, p. 468.

2. "So closely related to the growth of industrialism as hardly to deserve treatment as a separate cause, is the spread of a spirit of restless dissatisfaction. Mr. Brice has called this 'the age of discontent,' and this characteristic of the time in this country and Europe manifests itself in a theoretical questioning and criticism of marriage, and, perhaps, the weakening of its hold upon the community." *The Divorce Problem*, p. 70.

3. E. T. Devine, *Misery and Its Causes*, p. 210.

4. *Five Hundred and Seventy-four Deserters and Their Families*, p. 9.

5. *Annual Report of the City Magistrates' Courts of the City of New York* (1st Division), 1914.

sertion cases handled by the Chicago United Charities from 1909 to 1915 inclusive, only eleven were cases of deserting women.[1,2]

Tradition confines the women to the home. However much a woman may desire to leave her husband, unless the homes of friends or relatives offer her a refuge she will be hard pressed to find a place to go. Because of our conventions the eye of suspicion is much more quickly turned upon a homeless woman than upon a homeless man; the latter may go where he likes almost unquestioned. If there are young children she is still more firmly anchored. It is difficult to take them along, and still more difficult to leave them behind. Affection binds her to them. Only rarely is a woman found willing to yield the companionship of her children in order to obtain greater freedom for herself.

Between male and female on this point seems to be a difference of temperment. Where domestic affairs go wrong the woman is inclined to find relief in tears and upbraidings; the man resorts to profanity and to escape from the scene. Whether this distinction would manifest itself in this way if desertion were as easy for one as for the other, is a question. The fact is that at present desertion is not equally convenient to both. Social conventions, physical structure, the burden of children and economic dependence are definite barriers which tend to hold the wife in the home, however much she may desire her freedom.

3—DESERTION NOT A RACIAL PHENOMENON.

Because the domestic relation is so intimate and personal conditions inevitably arise within it which cause friction and clashes. Since these conditions—inherent in the very nature of the family and the intimacies which it imposes—are common to all people we find desertion to be present to some extent among all races.[3] Undoubtedly desertion will vary in the different regions as conditions for it are favorable or unfavorable; and the racial customs, sentiments and general attitudes toward the domestic relation will to an extent affect behavior. Observation of the great number of nationalities represented among deserters in our American cities, however, suggest a tendency common to all types of mankind to respond in the same way in the same situation, whatever may have been their inherited racial traditions.

Miss Brandt's 574 deserters, taken at random from twenty-five cities of fifteen states, showed twenty-two different nationalities.[4] Among the 327 cases studied from the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations eighteen nationalities were represented. A similar diversity appears on the records of the domestic relations courts of the Borough of Manhattan and The Bronx,[5] and in the Boston investigation of desertion in 1901.[6]

Among 8,957 deserted families aided by the Cook County Agent during the six years from 1909 to 1915 inclusive (except for 1914, for which no report has been published) twenty-nine nationalities were represented.[7]

Dr. Alix Westerkamp, formerly head of the Woman's Legal Aid Society of Frankfort-on-Main, and later General Secretary of the German Association for the Protection of Children, out of a seven years' experience in social work in Germany speaks as follows concerning desertion:

"Family desertion is not nearly so big a problem in the German

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1. Compiled from the unpublished records of the United Charities of Chicago.

2. These figures, however, do not necessarily mean that the ratio of desertion is so excessively disproportionate between the sexes. There is more reason, usually, for the wife than for the husband to make known that she has been deserted. The husband is commonly the breadwinner. When he deserts, she becomes dependent, and is compelled to seek assistance from a court or a relief agency. For this reason the man's desertion is more likely to become a matter of record than that of the wife.

3. *Vide*, Chap. i, Sec. 2.

4. *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

5. *Op. cit.*

6. Zilpha D. Smith, *Deserted Wives and Deserting Husbands*, p. 4.

7. See Table I, page 16. Compiled from the annual reports.

TABLE I.

NATIONALITY OR NATIVITY.

	Total No. of All Cases Aided.	Total No. of Desertion Cases Aided.	Percentage of Desertions.	Rank: No. Desertions.	Rank: All Cases.
Jewish	4,239	903	21.3	1	6
Negro	4,089	866	21.1	2	7
Lithuanian	1,491	264	17.7	3	10
Danish	225	40	17.7	4	21
Canadian	749	128	17.1	5	14
Irish	5,562	590	16.0	6	5
American (white)	13,820	2,177	15.7	7	1
French	260	38	14.6	8	20
Scotch	334	48	14.3	9	17
Hungarian	446	58	13.0	10	16
German	7,109	888	12.4	11	3
Russian	302	37	12.2	12	18
Slavonian	965	116	12.0	13	11
Polish	13,693	1,570	11.4	14	2
Swede	1,584	173	10.9	15	9
Bohemian	3,197	335	10.4	16	8
English	873	83	9.5	17	12
Austrian	832	76	9.1	18	13
Hollander	272	23	8.4	19	19
Norwegian	696	58	8.3	20	15
Italian	6,079	427	7.0	21	4
Belgian*	78	12			
Finlander*	29	2			
Roumanian*	26	5			
Spanish*	15	1			
Swiss*	89	15			
Syrian*	38	1			
Welsh*	46	8			
Greek*	75	15			
29 nationalities	67,213	8,957			

* Number of cases aided too small to justify any conclusions as to the ratio of desertion.

Empire as it is in the United States of America. * * * I remember being perfectly dumfounded when, after coming to this country, by and by I realized the size of the problem in your large cities."[1]

In spite of the traditions of the Fatherland more than twelve per cent of the 7109 German families relieved by the Cook County Agent during the six years reported, are shown by the above table to have been deserted by their heads.

Jewish life normally is such as to bind the members of the family closely together. The Hebrew people are traditionally devoted to the family; veneration for it has been from time immemorial a part of their religion, and all their racial *mores* from days of tribal organization until now have conduced to keep inviolate the obligations and ties of family life. We are told by leaders of social work among the Jews that today desertion is uncommon in Hebrew communities of the Old World. Yet among the Jewish people in the United States desertion is at present a problem of no less proportions than among the Gentiles, so far as there are records for comparison.[2]

These facts lead to the conclusion that desertion is not a racial or national characteristic, but an effect of the social situation. Under the influence of American city life, apparently, the restraints of racial tradition are loosened and the family is disintegrated.

1. Letter, Feb. 28, 1916.
2. *Vide*, Tables I and V (b).

4—DESERTION NOT A PHENOMENON OF RELIGION OR SECT.

With respect to religious affiliation no sect nor creed is exempt. Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic, Greek and Roman, as well as those who deny every form of religious connection, appear as deserters in the Court of Domestic Relations and in the records of the relief societies. The proportion of Catholics listed as deserters is perhaps higher than it would be if their church permitted divorce, since some men may resort to desertion to secure relief, who would secure divorces if they were not forbidden.

Only nineteen persons of the 654 involved in the 327 cases taken from the records of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations failed to report themselves of some religious affiliation. Possibly many of those who did report themselves as such were not really church communicants but gave as their connection that of their parents. Of these deserters who were members the evidence is that they were only nominally so at best and not a class which their respective churches would like to have considered as typical of their membership.

TABLE II.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION.

	No. of Men.	No. of Women.
Protestant	153	148
Roman Catholic	131	138
Jewish	32	31
Greek Catholic	1	1
No church	2	
Total	319	318
No record	8	9
Grand Total	327	327

Note.—In 57 cases husband and wife were of different religious training. In 270 cases they were of the same.

5—DESERTION AS "THE POOR MAN'S DIVORCE."

Family disintegration is not peculiar to any division of our society. The instability of domestic relations is manifested as often among the rich as among the poor. One has but to turn the pages of a metropolitan daily to discover that no social group or class is exempt.

Separations may take the form of divorce or of desertion. They differ, however, in an important way: divorce is a legal and authorized separation of man and wife deliberately entered into and officially sanctioned and recorded; desertion is illegal, unauthorized, not officially recorded, and is a spontaneous action. To the former there are three parties: the man, the woman, and the public represented by the court; to the latter there are but two—the public is not consulted nor petitioned for consent to the action.

Of these two forms of conjugal separation, observation leads to the conclusion that desertion is characteristic of the poorer classes of the city rather than of the wealthier. That is to say, that while disintegration of families is common to all classes, *this particular form* of disintegration tends to occur with disproportionate frequency among classes of the lower economic strata, whereas divorce and legal separation are more commonly resorted to among the upper.

Observation of deserters shows them to be for the most part, men of humble occupations—wage-earners. Of the 327 cases examined from the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations only thirteen men were in business or practicing for themselves. The remaining 314, except one who was living without occupation at his parents' expense, and eight who were unrecorded, were scattered among fifty occupations, ranging from the lowly positions of janitor and bootblack on up to "vaudeville artist"; and over half, as a glance at the accompanying table will show, would be classed as unskilled laborers.

TABLE I.

NATIONALITY OR NATIVITY.

	Total No. of All Cases Aided.	Total No. of Desertion Cases Aided.	Percentage of Desertions.	Rank: No. Desertions.	Rank: All Cases.
Jewish	4,239	903	21.3	1	6
Negro	4,089	866	21.1	2	7
Lithuanian	1,491	264	17.7	3	10
Danish	225	40	17.7	4	21
Canadian	749	128	17.1	5	14
Irish	5,562	590	16.0	6	5
American (white)	13,820	2,177	15.7	7	1
French	260	38	14.6	8	20
Scotch	334	48	14.3	9	17
Hungarian	446	58	13.0	10	16
German	7,109	888	12.4	11	3
Russian	302	37	12.2	12	18
Slavonian	965	116	12.0	13	11
Polish	13,693	1,570	11.4	14	2
Swede	1,584	173	10.9	15	9
Bohemian	3,197	335	10.4	16	8
English	873	83	9.5	17	12
Austrian	832	76	9.1	18	13
Hollander	272	23	8.4	19	19
Norwegian	696	58	8.3	20	15
Italian	6,079	427	7.0	21	4
Belgian*	78	12			
Finlander*	29	2			
Roumanian*	26	5			
Spanish*	15	1			
Swiss*	89	15			
Syrian*	38	1			
Welsh*	46	8			
Greek*	75	15			
29 nationalities	67,213	8,957			

* Number of cases aided too small to justify any conclusions as to the ratio of desertion.

Empire as it is in the United States of America. * * * I remember being perfectly dumfounded when, after coming to this country, by and by I realized the size of the problem in your large cities."[1]

In spite of the traditions of the Fatherland more than twelve per cent of the 7109 German families relieved by the Cook County Agent during the six years reported, are shown by the above table to have been deserted by their heads.

Jewish life normally is such as to bind the members of the family closely together. The Hebrew people are traditionally devoted to the family; veneration for it has been from time immemorial a part of their religion, and all their racial *mores* from days of tribal organization until now have conduced to keep inviolate the obligations and ties of family life. We are told by leaders of social work among the Jews that today desertion is uncommon in Hebrew communities of the Old World. Yet among the Jewish people in the United States desertion is at present a problem of no less proportions than among the Gentiles, so far as there are records for comparison.[2]

These facts lead to the conclusion that desertion is not a racial or national characteristic, but an effect of the social situation. Under the influence of American city life, apparently, the restraints of racial tradition are loosened and the family is disintegrated.

1. Letter, Feb. 28, 1916.
2. *Vide*, Tables I and V (b).

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TABLE III.

OCCUPATIONS OF MEN.

	No. of Men.	One man to each of the following:
Laborer	35	Vaudeville Artist
Teamster	32	Express Business
Clerk and Bookkeeper	23	Hog Driver
Salesman and Agent	20	Shoe Repairer
Tailor	13	Wood Worker
Carpenter	13	Marble Polisher
Machinist	10	Bootblack
Chauffeur	10	Railroad Inspector
Porter	10	Bricklayer
Street Car Service	8	Boxmaker
Waiter	7	Watchman
Janitor	5	Tinner
Printer	5	Elevator Operator
Peddler	5	Sailor
Painter	5	Cigar Maker
Barber	5	Fireman
Switchman	4	Shipping Clerk
Bartender	4	Dentist
Baker	3	Furniture Polisher
Iron-worker	3	Steamfitter
Plumber	3	Sausage Maker
Electrician	3	Total—21
Cook	3	
Factory Hand	3	
Plasterer	3	
Farmer	2	
Engineer	2	
Blacksmith	2	
Packer	2	
Butcher	2	
Miscellaneous (stated, see next column)	21	
Total known	266	
Miscellaneous (not stated)	52	
No occupation	1	
No record	8	
Grand total	327	

Note.—Of 127 cases where the distinction was made, 78 were steady workers; 49 were irregular workers.

The wages of these men are small, such as usually accompany the occupations listed. Of the 284 who were left when the thirty of whom there was no record, and the thirteen who were working for themselves, were deducted, 212 were receiving when working less than twenty-five dollars per week; and 169 were receiving less than twenty dollars per week. These wages do not indicate affluence.

TABLE IV.

USUAL WAGES OF MAN PER WEEK, WHEN WORKING.

Number of men receiving—	
Less than $7 per week	1
$ 7 to $ 8 per week	3
9 to 11 per week	18
12 to 14 per week	51
15 to 19 per week	96
20 to 24 per week	43
25 and over per week	72
Total known	284
In business for themselves, or practicing a profession	13
No record	30
Grand total	327

Note.—Of the 72 receiving "25 and over":

3 reported $ 60 per week
1 reported 70 per week
1 reported 110 per week

Judge William DeLacy of the Juvenile Court of the District of Columbia, in speaking before the Seventh Maryland Conference of Charities and Corrections at Baltimore, gave as his opinion that "desertion and non-support seem to be the poor man's method of enjoying a divorce." Honorable Joseph Z. Uhlir, after thirteen months on the bench of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations, concurs in Judge DeLacey's opinion:

> "The Court of Domestic Relations is primarily a court for poor people and immigrants. The rich settle their domestic difficulties elsewhere, either by suit for divorce, or by a separation mutually agreed upon." [1]

Mr. Percy S. Grant in an article on "Divorce and the Family" speaks even more strongly:

> "Desertion, not divorce, is the recourse of the poor. * * * I have never personally known a divorced person in the working classes. * * * The rules of the game are not understood and observed. They will not go through the forms of legal release when they cannot endure legal ties. They take matters in their own hands and break the rules like children." [2]

As to the probable reasons for this difference:

If the rich man no longer cares to stay with his family he can afford to employ the law to obtain release (even to the extent of migrating to another state for the purpose if need be), whereas the poor man cannot. Amicable release may be expedited by his ability to make provision for his family's economic needs, in the form of alimony or voluntary settlement.

Moreover, the wealthy man finds divorce more convenient than desertion. Economic interests confine him to a specific locality and bind him to a given community. A professional man with a clientele built up after patient labor, or one established in a fixed business, or one occupying a salaried position of trust to which he has attained only after years of climbing, is less mobile than the casual laborer. He is not at liberty to pick up and leave as is a wage-earner, who can carry with him wherever he goes his ability to labor, which is his chief stock-in-trade. Such a one prefers to resort to the courts for a solution of his difficulties rather than to make the sacrifice of business opportunity and prestige which desertion would necessitate.

The *mores* in respect to divorce are changing. In more sophisticated communities it is no longer looked upon as a disgrace as it was at one time. Divorced persons do not lose caste in the higher social circles; they may gain social importance as a result of the status. In some communities, at least, desertion is not looked upon complacently, and one who deserts may fall in public esteem. Where this is the case additional reason is afforded for preferring divorce as a method of settlement of marital difficulties.

The poorer classes, as Judge Uhlir indicates, carry their troubles to the divorce court less freely. First of all, the expense is well-nigh prohibitive for the very poor.[3] Second, the prohibition of the Roman Catholic Church is particularly influential among the masses of poor in cities, who, owing largely to European parentage, are predominantly Catholic. Third, there is among these classes, particularly among the immigrants, an ignorance of the procedure necessary to secure divorce, coupled with a suspicion of courts and officers, which keeps them from resorting to the law.

On the other hand, desertion brings about the desired result just as effectively; and its inexpensiveness and the ease with which it may be accomplished under all conditions, recommend it. Neither does desertion carry with it the finality that characterizes divorce and legal separation. It permits the deserter, should he desire to do so, to return to his family. Finally, among the poorer classes, especially among the immigrant populations of great cities, no social stigma attaches to the man who leaves his family.

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1. *Report of the Work of the [Chicago] Court of Domestic Relations*, 1913-1914, p. 3.

2. *Ainslee's Magazine*, April, 1902.

3. Mr. Patrick J. J. McCarthy, Divorce Statistician of Cook County, Ill. estimates fifty dollars as the average cost of obtaining a divorce in Chicago.

6—DESERTION NOT PRIMARILY DUE TO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

Although desertion is more common among the poor, the corollary need not be drawn that poverty is the cause of desertion. This is a very generally accepted opinion, but the facts do not sustain it. Desertion does not appear to be due primarily, at least, to economic conditions.[1]

If desertion depended primarily upon the economic condition of the deserter it might be expected that the desertion rate would reach its highest point in times of industrial depression or extensive unemployment when poverty is most widespread and acute. As a matter of fact the exact reverse of this condition appears. During the winter of 1914-'15 Chicago, in company with the other cities of the United States, passed through the severest condition of unemployment of more than two decades. The strain upon her public and private charities was the most exacting they have ever experienced. Yet the percentage of applications for relief from deserted families was much less than in normal years. The following table prepared from the annual reports of Chicago's three leading charities for the year will make the point clear:

Increase in number of *all* cases aided in 1915 over 1914:	
United Charities	35.00 per cent
Cook County Agent	39.60 per cent
Associated Jewish Charities	32.00 per cent
Decrease in per cent of *desertion* cases:	
1914—United Charities	10.60 per cent
Cook County Agent	11.60 per cent
Associated Jewish Charities	9.33 per cent
1915—United Charities	8.09 per cent
Cook County Agent	9.20 per cent
Associated Jewish Charities	7.00 per cent
In 1915 over 1914—United Charities	2.51 per cent
Cook County Agent	2.40 per cent
Associated Jewish Charities	2.32 per cent

Bearing upon this point is the very important statement of Mr. Max Herzberg, President of the United Hebrew Charities of Philadelphia:

> "Poverty enters very little into the question of family desertion. In other words men do not desert their wives because of industrial conditions; they very rarely desert them because of lack of unemployment. I have taken the trouble for a number of years to gather some statistics on the question of the causes of desertion, and particularly with reference to the question of desertion in so-called periods of industrial crises; and taking the last five or six years (prior to 1913) as a criterion, and the statistics of the years prior to that will prove the same thing, I find that in 1906 seventeen and one-half per cent (17½%) of all the cases that came to our attention were due to lack of employment or insufficient work, and twelve per cent (12%) were cases of desertion. In 1907, when times were getting worse, the causes of application for relief were, nineteen per cent (19%) for lack of employment, and only nine per cent (9%) were cases of family desertion. In 1908 which was almost the high water mark of the panic, we had forty per cent (40%) of applications due to industrial conditions, and only nine per cent (9%) were due to family desertion. In 1909 * * * a year in which we all had a hard time to cope with conditions, fifty per cent (50%) of our applications were due to lack of employment, and only six per cent (6%) were due to family desertion.
>
> This condition is true not only of the United Hebrew Charities of Philadelphia, but with other and similar organizations all over the country * * *; and it only proves the assertion that I started with, that desertion is not primarily an economic question."[2]

The second point in substantiation of the statement that desertion and

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1. That there is some relation between the two is not disputed. Desertion often follows family quarrels, and pinched finances are a fruitful source of domestic altercations. The argument here is to the effect that poverty is not the *main* cause of desertion and that there is not any *necessary* connection between them.

2. *Philadelphia City Club Bulletin*, February 12, 1913, p. 248.

poverty are not necessarily causally related lies in the fact that many of the deserters studied were at work immediately before their departure. The Boston investigation in 1901 gave the information that 59.6 per cent of the men concerning whom the facts were known were employed at the time of their desertion,[1] and the same was true of nearly half—270—of Miss Brandt's 574 deserters.[2]

Although the tables of wages for the 327 Chicago Court of Domestic Relations cases indicate them to have been men of modest incomes,[3] it sufficiently demonstrates on the other hand that the economic condition was not the basic determinant. All but seventy-three of the 284 whose earnings were known were receiving fifteen dollars or more per week; seventy-two were receiving twenty-five dollars or more, of whom three were drawing sixty dollars; one, seventy; and one, a hundred and ten dollars. Of 127 concerning whom the facts were known, seventy-eight or 61.4 per cent, were steady and regular workers.[4]

The contention that desertion is not inevitably a result of poverty has yet other support. This is the fact that for every man who deserts there are many men just as grievously burdened in every way who do not desert. The records of relief agencies show the number of married couples aided to be far in excess of deserted wives.[5] Moreover, a careful study of case records of deserted families reveals specific evidence in many of them that there was no need for charity at all until after the desertion had taken place.

William Bergson[6] is a case in point. Poverty did not drive him to desert his family. Besides his wife, with whom he had lived for sixteen years without manifesting any tendency to desert, there was no one to support but his little twelve year old daughter. His financial burden was much less than that of any of his neighbors, and he had a much better income with which to meet it, for he owned a prosperous teaming business of his own: a van, a wagon and two carts. But when Bergson came under the influence of "the other woman" he sold his business to the last cartwheel and used the proceeds to finance an elopement with her.

Neither can poverty be offered as the excuse for Oscar Wilkins. His skill as a tailor insured him regular employment, and recommendations from employers were forthcoming. Good wages were accompanied by a disposition to save, and his bank book at one time showed a balance of four hundred dollars. Poverty was not pinching at the time of his desertion, for he had two hundred and fifty dollars in the bank at the time. This, however, he thoughtfully withdrew at the time of his departure following a quarrel with his wife, thus protecting himself against immediate privation whatever might be said of her necessity.

In the light of all the evidence the belief that poverty is a leading cause of desertion appears untenable. The conviction is compelled that the relation between poverty and the essential causes of desertion is a comparatively incidental one.

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1. Zilpha D. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 29.
3. *Vide*, Table IV.
4. *Vide*, Table III.
5. For example, from the respective records in 1915 we may note the following ratio between the number of married couples and deserted wives:
Chicago United Charities, 8 to 1; Cook County Agent, 8 to 1; Associated Jewish Charities of Chicago, 7 to 1. Of the five thousand cases analyzed by Dr. Devine in *Misery and Its Causes*, the ratio is 6 to 1.
6. Fictitious names are used throughout.

CHAPTER III.

Extent of Desertion.

1—INCOMPLETENESS OF STATISTICAL DATA ON DESERTION.

In all parts of the United States marriages and divorces are required to be publicly recorded. In many parts of the country births and deaths, as well, are required by law to be officially registered. Therefore tabulation of statistics with reference to them is a matter of comparative ease.

With respect to family desertion, however, it is not possible to obtain data with anything like such completeness. Since the law does not require the record it is patent that many cases must remain unknown. Only where redress is sought against the deserter through the courts, or where poverty or misfortune of the neglected family brings it into contact with relief agencies, or in some similar contingency, does desertion become a matter of record.

Except in occasional instances we have no way of getting information regarding deserted women who, for various reasons, may desire to refrain from making public record of having been forsaken: wives who, because of the disgrace of it are not willing to have their status known; wives who, because of fear of reprisals of the recreant husbands, do not dare to resort to legal means to bring them to task; wives who maintain silence because of preferring their absence to their presence; wives who for very loyalty to the disloyal absent ones shield them by not speaking; wives who would report their cases if they only knew how to go about the perplexing business. How many of these there are and how their numbers might swell the record we have no means of knowing. We can only present fragmentary data at best from such sources as are available, knowing that they do not begin to indicate the full extent to which desertion permeates our modern life.

2—STATISTICS ON DESERTION.

The Municipal Court of Chicago for the six years from December 1, 1907, to November 30, 1913, records that of 77,600 misdemeanor cases handled, 8,887 or 11.45 per cent, were desertions.[1]

The first annual report of the Divorce Statistician of Cook County, Ills., indicates that of 3,458 divorces granted for the year ending July 1, 1915, 1,045 or 30 per cent, were because of the husband's desertion.[2]

The report of the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas and Court of Appeals of Cuyahoga Co., Ohio, (Cleveland), is as follows:[3]

From July 1, 1910, to April 1, 1910, (four years, nine months):
Total number of divorces granted, all causes.....5,425
Total number of divorces granted because of absence and neglect of husband 2,626
Desertion of husband comprised 48.40 per cent of the total.

The report of the United States Bureau of the Census for the whole of the United States is as follows:[4]

From 1887 to 1906 inclusive, (twenty years):
Total number of divorces granted, all causes.....945,625
Total number of divorces granted because of desertion of husband..211,219
Desertion of husband comprised 22.3 per cent of the total.

The conclusion reached by the committee appointed by the National Con-

1. *Seventh Annual Report*, p. 132.
2. From the unpublished records of the Cook County Clerk.
3. Letter, April 15, 1915.
4. *Special Reports of the United States Census Office: Marriage and Divorce*, 1867-1906, I, 26.

ference of Charities and Correction to investigate the subject of family desertion is startling enough, but the findings of the investigation conducted during the course of this study indicate that the ratio they named is not too large a figure:

> "Detailed investigation in several states has shown that of all families under the care of private charity associations, no less than one in ten owe their destitution to this cause [desertion]." [1]

With the object of getting direct information bearing upon this point from the most reliable sources available letters were sent out to seventy of the charity organizations and relief societies affiliated with the National Conference of Charities and Correction in sixty-six of the larger cities in thirty-eight states of the Union, and three cities of Canada. Of the thirty-two responding, seventeen had no provision for recording desertion cases treated under a separate classification; one (Dayton) had had its records destroyed by flood; twelve only were able to send accurate data for the two consecutive years concerning which inquiry was made. The records of the twelve organizations showed:

For 1913:
Total number of cases aided.....31,090
Total number of desertion cases..... 3,124
Desertions comprised 10 per cent of the total.

For 1914:
Total number of cases aided.....41,156
Total number of desertion cases..... 3,835
Desertions comprised 9.31 per cent of the total.

The most complete data available for a considerable period of time is reported by the Department of Poor Relief of Cook County, Ills., (Cook County Agent). The annual reports of this Department for the period from December 1, 1902, to November 30, 1915, show the following for the thirteen years:

Total number of cases aided.....123,626
Total number of desertion cases..... 16,134
Desertions comprised 13.05 per cent of the total.

The records afforded by the United Charities of Chicago for the period from the reorganization of the society October 1, 1909, to September 30, 1915, are complete and show the following for the six years:

Total number of cases aided.....88,851
Total number of desertion cases..... 9,065
Desertions comprised 10.2 per cent of the total.

The Associated Charities of Washington have a record on this point from 1896 to 1904 inclusive. Their figures as reported by Mr. Wm. H. Baldwin are as follows for the nine year period:

Total number of cases aided.....22,549
Total number of desertion cases..... 1,603
Desertions comprised 7.1 per cent of the total.[2]

The Boston Associated Charities have a record covering five years:

> "In every year between 1889 and 1893, and again in 1899, the new families becoming known to us were classified as to conjugal condition. The percentage of deserted wives continued practically the same, between 8,75 and 10 per cent, the average being 9.33 per cent." [3]

Buffalo reports its desertions from 1905 to 1909 to have ranged between 10

1. "Resolutions on Desertion and Extradition," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1905, p. 617.

2. *Family Desertion and Non-support Laws*, p. 7. (Published in the volume with Miss Brandt's *Five Hundred and Seventy-four Deserters and Their Families.*)

A letter from the Associated Charities of Washington, D. C., date of April 10, 1916, states that the Society is not able to supply desertion statistics subsequent to 1904.

3. Zilpha D. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

and 14 per cent,[1] and Detroit reports its desertion cases for 1909 to be 15 per cent of the total.[2]

The Charity Organization Society of New York "keeps no record of the types of cases" that come under its care,[3] but its secretary, Dr. E. T. Devine, in his analysis of five thousand cases of misery coming under the care of the society during the two years ending September 30, 1908, found ten per cent of them due to the desertion of the husband.[4]

The Associated Charities of Dayton, while unable to give exact figures on account of the flood of 1914 having destroyed all records, was nevertheless able to state definitely that desertions for the year ending September 30, 1914, represented 12 per cent of the total.[5]

The Brooklyn Bureau of Charities writes: "A special study shows this [desertion] to be about one-tenth of all cases."[6]

The Charity Organization Society of Indianapolis showed a desertion percentage of 24.5 in 1914;[7] and Minneapolis was not far behind this record in 1913, with a mark of 17.2 per cent.[8]

The Associated Charities of Winnipeg, the only one of the leading Canadian organizations to report definitely, found desertion to comprise 11.2 per cent of all its charity cases in 1913.[9]

A close record kept by the Jewish Aid Society of Chicago from 1912 to 1915 gave the following for the four year period:

Total number of cases aided.....11,651
Total number of desertion cases..... 1,083
Desertions comprised 9.3 per cent of the total.

The annual reports of the Federated Jewish Charities of Baltimore for 1913 show 9.6 per cent of its cases due to desertion; in 1914 this increased to 15.8 per cent.

The United Hebrew Charities of New York City for the two years ending September 30, 1908, reported 11.6 per cent of all cases to be desertion cases.[10]

The annual report of the Society of Hebrew Charities of Philadelphia for 1914 records a desertion percentage of 13.1. The Federated Jewish Charities of Boston for the same year report 10 per cent.[11]

Of the twenty-four relief societies in fifteen countries abroad to which inquiries were sent only six returned answers: Berlin, Geneva, Adelaide, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast. Only three of these were able to give statistics regarding desertion.

Glasgow, through the Clerk of its Parish Council, reports desertions to have "reached their highest points in 1901 with 11.2 per cent, and in 1903, with 11.4 per cent, since which there has been a steady decrease in the percentage to 7.1 which has obtained for the past two years, [viz., 1911 and 1912]."[12]

The Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society of Adelaide, Australia, reported that of its cases in 1913, 6.8 per cent were desertions; in 1914 it dropped to 3.1 per cent.[13]

The Edinburgh Parish Council reported 14.58 per cent in 1913, and 16.9 per cent in 1914, of its new applications as being from deserted wives.[14]

1. M. D. Waldman, "Family Desertion," *Proceedings of the Jewish National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1910, p. 55.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Letter, February 27, 1915.
4. *Misery and Its Causes*, p. 210.
5. Letter, February 27, 1915.
6. Letter, March 4, 1915.
7. Letter, March 10, 1915.
8. Letter, February 26, 1915.
9. Letter, March 3, 1915.
10. M. D. Waldman, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
11. Letter, July 14, 1915.
12. Jas. R. Motion, *Wife and Family Desertion*, p. 4.
13. Letter, April 8, 1915.
14. *Abstracts of the Accounts of the Parish Council of Edinburgh*, 1913, p. 29; 1914, p. 32.

TABLE V (a)

STATISTICS ON DESERTION.

Organizations Affiliated with The National Conference of Charities and Correction.

	City.	Year.	Total: All Cases Aided.	Total: Desertions.	Percentage of Desertions.
1.	Indianapolis	1914	2,274	559	24.5
2.	Minneapolis	1913	1,524	263	17.2
3.	Detroit*	1909			15.0
4.	Chicago	1913	13,017	1,622	12.4
5.	Dayton†	1914			12.0
6.	Winnipeg, Man.§	1913	785	88	11.2
7.	Chicago	1914	16,369	1,740	10.6
8.	Chicago	1912	15,184	1,609	10.5
9.	Chicago	1910	9,582	998	10.1
10.	New York	1907-'08	5,000	499	10.0
11.	Brooklyn	1914	6,425	642	10.0
12.	Brooklyn	1913	5,237	523	10.0
13.	Buffalo	1913	666	66	10.0
14.	Washington|	1901-'02	4,577	427	9.3
15.	Boston‖	1889-'93			9.3
16.	Washington	1900	1,848	170	9.2
17.	Indianapolis	1913	1,393	118	8.4
18.	Buffalo	1914	913	74	8.1
19.	Chicago	1915	22,105	1,790	8.09
20.	New Haven	1913	1,379	110	7.9
21.	Richmond	1913	623	49	7.9
22.	Columbus	1913	1,276	90	7.6
23.	Washington	1898	2,115	160	7.5
24.	Washington	1899	2,473	182	7.3
25.	New Haven	1914	2,357	166	7.0
26.	Columbus	1914	1,787	125	7.0
27.	Washington	1904	3,898	266	6.8
28.	Little Rock	1914	1,493	102	6.8
29.	Minneapolis	1914	2,381	159	6.7
30.	Richmond	1914	771	50	6.5
31.	Washington	1903	3,555	234	6.5
32.	Washington	1897	1,919	108	5.6
33.	St. Louis	1913	3,363	174	5.1
34.	Winnipeg, Man.§	1914	1,405	70	5.0
35.	Spokane	1914	1,228	49	3.9
36.	Little Rock	1913	1,378	53	3.8
37.	Spokane	1913	867	29	3.3
38.	Philadelphia	1913	6,664	211	3.1
39.	St. Louis	1914	4,847	149	3.0
40.	Washington	1896	2,164	56	2.6

* M. D. Waldman, *op. cit.*

† Letter, February 27, 1915.

| Twenty months only.

‖ Zilpha D. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

§ Canadian Conference of Charities and Correction.

TABLE V (b).

STATISTICS ON DESERTION.

Organizations Affiliated with The Jewish National Conference of Charities and Correction.

	City	Year.	Total: All Cases Aided.	Total: Desertions.	Percentage of Desertions.
1.	Baltimore	1914	417	66	15.8
2.	Philadelphia	1914	1,114	146	13.1
3.	Philadelphia*	1906			12.0
4.	New York†	1907-'08			11.6
5.	Chicago	1912	2,257	262	11.6
6.	Chicago	1913	2,304	255	11.0
7.	Boston	1914	546	55	10.0
8.	Baltimore	1913	1,934	186	9.6
9.	Chicago	1914	3,056	285	9.3
10.	New York	1913	3,996	366	9.1
11.	Philadelphia*	1907			9.0
12.	Philadelphia*	1908			9.0
13.	St. Louis	1914	369	28	7.5
14.	New York	1914	4,285	311	7.2
15.	Chicago	1915	4,034	281	7.0
16.	Philadelphia*	1909			6.0
17.	Boston	1913	669	39	5.8
18.	San Francisco	1913	1,754	59	3.3

**Philadelphia City Club Bulletin*, February 12, 1913, p. 248.

†M. D. Waldman, *op cit.*

TABLE V (c).

STATISTICS ON DESERTION.

*Department of Poor Relief, Cook County, Ill.**

Year.	Total: All Cases Aided	Total: Desertions.	Percentage of Desertions.
1903	6,058	792	13.0
1904	7,650	959	12.5
1905	7,874	939	11.9
1906	5,509	903	16.4
1907	5,431	855	15.7
1908	11,714	1,299	11.0
1909	9,303	1,290	13.8
1910	8,191	1,263	15.4
1911	10,654	1,566	14.7
1912	12,635	1,805	14.3
1913	9,487	1,492	15.7
1914†	11,867	1,379	11.6
1915	17,253	1,592	9.2
Total	123,626	16,134	13.05

*From the *Annual Reports of the Cook County Agent.*

†Annual report for 1914 not published. These figures are quoted from the original records.

CHAPTER IV.

Social Significance of Desertion

Desertion, like all other human actions, must be judged in the light of its consequences. No abstract criterion of morality may be called in as a standard by which to appraise it. The results of desertion are of practical consequence to us. In its last analysis desertion must stand approved or condemned solely in the light of the fruit it yields.

1—EFFECTS UPON THE FAMILY.

Wherever the subject of human unhappiness is discussed the unfortunate lot of the widow and orphan does not fail of mention. But the lot of the widow and orphan by *desertion* is often a great deal more difficult and perplexing than that of those for whose estate death is responsible. Where adequate means of support are not at hand the same difficult problem of making a living confronts both. The task is embittered for the deserted wife and mother by the knowledge that the one to whom she has the legal right (but not the power) to turn for support is still alive.

The wife who secures a divorce frequently has her future living partly guaranteed from alimony or definite financial settlement legally arranged. Pensions from various sources are frequently available for the widow. Both of these are denied the woman who is deserted. The former is withheld by the nature of the case, the latter oftentimes by specific enactment or policy of discrimination against her. Those who administer mothers' pensions are fearful lest an extension of them to deserted women shall prove an incentive to other husbands to desert. Not infrequently the agencies to which widows may freely and without question turn for support deny aid to deserted women whose need is just as great, on the ground that the husband is still living and should provide for his own.

In some cases the unhappiness and misery which follows the husband's departure may be reckoned as a part of the just retribution visited upon the wife for her share of the responsibility in causing it; but, if we may take Miss Brandt's conclusions in the matter, this cannot fairly be said in the majority of cases. Of her 574 desertions she says:

> "In 245 cases, almost two-thirds of the 386 for which explanations were available, the chief responsibility for the disruption of the home seems to rest on the recreant husband; in 41 cases, about 12 per cent, it seems to have been chiefly the wife's fault; and in fifty-two, over 13 per cent, man and wife seem to have been equally to blame ,and in the other forty-three, almost 12 per cent, the immediate responsibility lay in circumstances out of the control of both."[1]

One of the most tragic features of desertion thus appears in the fact that so large a number of those who suffer most are persons who have no part in causing it. Information as to the number of persons involved by desertion is available only here and there:

According to Miss Smith's report in Boston in 1901:
228 deserters left 228 wives and 524 children under fourteen years.[2]

According to the committee's report in Philadelphia in 1903:
208 deserters left 208 wives and 537 children under fourteen years.[3]

According to Miss Brandt's schedules:

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1. *Five Hundred and Seventy-four Deserters and their Families,* p. 39.
2. *Deserted Wives and Deserting Husbands,* p. 7.
3. *Report of the Special Committee on Wife Desertion, p.* 2.

574 deserters left 574 wives and 1,665 children of whom 80.3 per cent were under fourteen years of age.[1]

According to the Stock Yards' United Charities report, October 1, 1910, to October 1, 1913:
603 deserters left 603 wives and 1,178 children.[2]

In six of the 327 cases from the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations the children were grown; of the remainder:
321 deserters left 321 wives and 479 children.

In 220 of the 1,592 desertion cases aided by the Cook County Agent in 1915 there were no young children; of the remainder:
1,372 deserters left 1,372 wives and 3,631 children under fourteen years.[3]

Out of these 3,306 cases where records are available, 8,014 children were involved, most of them under fourteen years of age. Including the 3,306 wives it appears that a total of 11,320 persons were condemned to all the wretchedness which follows in the wake of desertion; and apparently most of them may in no sense be considered as reaping a penalty for their sins.

These 3,306 cases show an average of 2.42 children per family. This is smaller than that of the population at large, as is to be expected in view of the abbreviated term of married life together, but sufficiently large to furnish an urgent argument against indifference to the fact of desertion.

The Juvenile Protective Association of Cincinnati reports as a result of its investigation for the year ending September 30, 1913, that 2,861 children were deserted during the twelve months, "over twice the total number of pupils attending our largest public school."[4] This number is 5.13 per cent of the entire school attendance reported for Cincinnati by the census of 1910.

A—Demoralization of its Members.

In some cases outdoor relief is absolutely refused to deserted families, or else granted under conditions which make it virtually a refusal. In such cases the family may be broken up and the disintegration which began with the father's departure be made complete by the scattering of the members who are left. The wholly dependent members of the group, and sometimes all are, may be placed in institutions, because under their altered economic status no means are available for going ahead as a family.

Even where outdoor relief is provided a host of demoralizing influences are at work among members of the family.

Physical discomfort is to be expected. Wherever the husband prior to his disappearance has contributed in any degree to his family's support, grudgingly or irregularly though it may have been, a lower standard of living must follow withdrawal of his help. This means a lower degree of physical comfort, less to eat, less to keep them warm, and the lessened vitality which would naturally follow. Where the husband has been the sole support it means abject poverty.

Encouragement to dependency naturally follows. If opportunities for self-support are not forthcoming outside relief must be obtained, and the persons affected become enrolled among the paupers. The statistics already given[5] indicate the extent which this reaches in the field of outdoor relief.

The reports from institutions giving indoor relief are fully as depressing. Mrs. Louis C. Madeira, vice-chairman of the Joint Executive Committee of the Children's Bureau of Philadelphia, estimates 15 per cent to be a "fair proportion" of the more than ten thousand children cared for by charity in Phila-

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
2. Compiled from the files, Chicago United Charities.
3. *Annual Report*, 1915.
4. "The Desertion Problem," an unpublished report, November 5, 1913.
5. *Vide*, Chap. iii.

delphia institutions who are there because of desertion.[1] A. Chevalier, Director of Municipal Assistance, Montreal, finds from figures kept through a series of years, that thirty-six out of every one hundred children in charity institutions of that city are there because they have either deserting or non-supporting fathers.[2] "From January 1, 1912, to January 1, 1913, the Cincinnati Orphan Asylum, out of a total number of 105 children received twenty-nine as a result of the desertion of the father."[3] Twenty-six and one-half per cent of the 1,149 delinquent children and neglected children appearing before the Juvenile Court of Seattle in 1912 "were from homes broken up by desertion and divorce."[4] "Twenty-five per cent of the commitments of children in New York City are attributed to desertion."[5] There are in New York approximately twenty-three thousand dependent children cared for as public charges in private institutions.[6] If Miss Brandt's statement is correct New York must care for some five thousand seven hundred and fifty deserted children in her homes, asylums and industrial schools each year.

The files of the Juvenile Court of Cook County, Ills., for the eleven years, 1904 to 1914 inclusive, show that 21,608 dependent children have appeared before it. From December 1, 1912, to December 1, 1914, a record was kept of the number whose fathers had deserted. Of the 4,403 during those two years, 791 or 18 per cent had been abandoned by their fathers. If the same percentage is applied to the eleven years it will appear that 3,889 dependent children of deserting fathers were taken before the court during that time.

Encouragement to delinquency is but a step from dependency. Not only beggary but theft and other crimes easily become contributions from the family to society. Economic necessity may partly account for delinquency.

> "As a rule the father is better able to provide for the material needs of the children than the mother, and as a result of this the children are not obliged to attempt to do anything in the way of increasing the household income at a very tender age. Mothers, on the other hand, in order to make both ends meet, are very often compelled to make their children earn a little in the streets and public places, and the children are in consequence, exposed to temptations which bring them within range of the criminal law."[7]

But economic necessity cannot account for all.

> "The father, as a rule, has more authority over the children than has the mother. Many of the fatherless children committed [to institutions] are sent there because the mother has lost all control over them. These children are found in the streets begging, or in the presence of criminals and the mother is actually unable to restrain them. The father, on the other hand" * * * would be able * * * "to prevent his children from associating with evil companions and falling into vagrant habits."[8]

The files of the Juvenile Court of Cook County for the eleven years, 1904 to 1914 inclusive, record 26,616 delinquent children as having appeared before it. Of this number, 8,918, more than a third, have been committed to reformatories. The intensive studies of delinquent children made by Misses Breckenridge and Abbott, (based upon 741 cases taken from this court), show that eight per cent of its delinquents have been deserted by their fathers.[9] Applying this ratio, it would mean that at least 2,129 delinquent deserted children have

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1. *Philadelphia City Club Bulletin,* February 12, 1913, p. 245.
2. *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Canadian Conference of Charities and Correction,* 1912, p. 79.
3. Juvenile Protective Association, "The Desertion Problem."
4. *Annual Report,* 1912, p. 9.
5. Lillian Brandt, *op. cit.,* p. 10.
6. Department of Public Charities, New York City, letter, June 21, 1916.
7. W. Douglas Morrison, *Juvenile Offenders,* pp. 139-40.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *The Delinquent Child and the Home,* p. 92.

passed through this court in a little more than a decade; and that more than seven hundred of them were committed for offenses which they might have escaped had their living fathers fulfilled their duties.

Probably only a negligible proportion of women leading lives of prostitution have been driven thither by reason of having been deserted. Dependable statistics upon this point would be exceedingly difficult to obtain, since they would have to be based upon the unsupported statements of the women themselves. But the fact that an occasional case is found of a woman, apparently moral up to the time of her husband's departure, entering a life of vice when left alone, shows that this may very properly be considered as one of the results of desertion. The Vice Commission of Chicago regarded deserted women as one of the sources of supply of professional prostitutes. In its report, *The Social Evil in Chicago*, published in 1911, the Commission made an analysis of thirty cases with reference to the original cause of entering the life, in which two of the thirty were reported as having done so because of having been deserted by faithless husbands.[1]

A report of an investigation of commercialized prostitution in New York City is made in a publication of the Bureau of Social Hygiene, by Katherine Bement Davis, at that time Superintendent of the New York State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills:

Of 671 prostitutes studied at the Bedford Reformatory, 55 were married women.

Of the 55, eight (14.5 per cent) gave their husbands' desertion as the reason for entering the life.[2]

Of 492 prostitutes studied at other institutions, 115 were married women.

Of the 115, twelve (10.4 per cent) gave their husbands' desertion as the reason for entering the life.[3]

Of 1,436 street prostitutes studied, 213 were married women.

Of the 213, thirty-four (16.0 per cent) gave their husbands' desertion as the reason for entering the life.[4]

> "A woman deserted for long periods by her husband is in a very helpless position, especially if she has a family depending upon her, and while a widow is an object of sympathy and of friendly help and guidance, the deserted wife is more often despised and blamed. The 'grass widow' as she is generally described, is looked upon as fair game for men of lustful inclinations, and this accounts for the number leading immoral lives. The desertion itself drives her frequently to intemperance, immorality and sloth." [5]

Deficient development of children, in addition to delinquency and dependency, is almost certain. If the children are too young to appear on the street and encounter its harmful influences, (and they must be young, indeed, for this to be the case), they suffer moral damage where the mother is forced to leave them and go to work, by being deprived of her training.

> "The enforced absence of the mother in the factory or workshop almost entirely deprives the family of the benefits of maternal supervision and maternal affection. The mother sees comparatively little of the children, and is therefore apt to lose some of the self-sacrificing devotion of motherhood; whilst the children see just as little of the mother and often grow up without the hallowing and constraining influences of maternal love. A life of this kind is full of peril to the young." [6]

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1. Pp. 166, 168.
2. G. J. Kneeland, *Commercialized Prostitution in New York City*, Table XXIII, p. 225.
3. *Ibid.*, Table XL, p. 241.
4. *Ibid.*, Table XLVIII, p. 249.
5. Jas. R. Motion, *Wife and Family Desertion: an inquiry into its causes*, pp. 18-19.
6. W. Douglas Morrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40.

The impoverished condition of the family demands that they shall go to work as soon as an age is reached when they can. Physically under-nourished to start with, they are subjected to all the harmful effects of child labor: weakened constitutions, lowered vitality, absence of recreation, limited educational opportunities both vocational and cultural. They are forced immaturely into the ranks of labor, and unskilled labor at that, and are thereby condemned to a condition of economic, moral, social and physical inferiority from which escape is difficult.

> "The child thrust prematurely into the factory, store, or mine is dwarfed in his moral development. The constant association with adults and the equally constant touch with the practical, bread-and-butter side of life tends to develop prematurely the adult view of life. The youthful wage-earner becomes a man, while, for normal development he should still be a child. The tendency in the home of wage-earning children is toward relaxation of parental discipline. The child wage-earner often loses his respect for parental authority. He feels that his ability to earn money places him in a position of independence of parental guidance. The child worker in the plastic adolescent period often hears much foul language and is frequently brought into touch with various immoral influences. Factory conditions are often such that the child worker is in great danger of moral contamination. * * * Child labor often leads to gross immorality. The overworked child early forms the habit of drinking intoxicating liquors. The monotony of his life leads him to seek the forms of amusement which excite and degrade. Venereal diseases are often unusually prevalent among working children in factory towns."[1]

Lowered ideals of marriage and family life are a natural outcome of desertion. This is an ill effect of desertion which is cumulative. Higher ideals can hardly be expected of the children than are found in the parents. They in turn will pass on to their children low ideals of marriage and citizenship, learned in so uncompromising a school; and they to theirs. Children who have witnessed such expressions of marital infelicity in their own homes cannot have a high regard for the union of man and wife when the matter comes personally to them. It is not improbable that they will come to regard marriage as a matter of personal convenience, a transient estate, a bond to be shuffled off if it becomes for them, in turn, a trifle irksome.

The unanchored husband. Great as is the demoralization of the members of the family left behind, frequently the husband himself is the one to suffer the most in demoralizing effects. His original delinquency of deserting his family gives rise to other forms of delinquency. Both purse and time are freed from family demands, however small. Homeless, unattached, his freedom to come and go leads him to saloons and vicious resorts and harmful companionships with their familiar results. His entire income is free to use on himself, and a part of it will be wastefully if not injuriously employed. He is released from the restraining influence which even an unpleasant home would in some degree exercise, and so becomes fertile ground for criminal impulses. The part he plays as a rolling stone makes for greater instability of character and weakens his ability to resist damaging influences. Whatever may have been the occasion of his desertion the very fact of his yielding to the stimulus has weakened him and made him less able to resist again; at the same time it has placed him in a position peculiarly exposed to further opportunities for vice and crime.

B—Relief from the Burden of an Unhappy Family Life.

Because a statement of its social significance would be incomplete without it, the fact must be mentioned that the immediate effects of desertion are sometimes beneficial. To the overworked wife and mother upon whom falls the responsibility of making a living the presence of a shiftless or incompetent husband who is also depending upon her for support may be a burden she would gladly have removed. His is one more mouth to feed,

1. F. T. Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor,* pp. 399-400.

and his example is a harmful one to the children. Or he may be positively vicious, given to drunken brawls in which he abuses his family. Such a home is better off when he departs, and his return may be the greatest calamity which could befall. When incompatibility of temperament is extreme the relief may be mutual.

This must not be understood as an attempt to justify desertion. There are, as our laws recognize, conditions under which wedded life together becomes impossible. For such cases provision is made in divorce and legal separation. These, and not desertion, should be employed as the way out.

2—EFFECTS UPON SOCIETY.

A—Financial Cost.

Only a very narrow or a very selfish mind would find in the financial incubus which desertion imposes upon society the largest reason for desiring to eliminate it. Yet we are justified in observing that if there were no other reason than this, the actual money saving to the community resulting from its elimination would be ample reason for trying to do away with it.

Statistics as to the actual financial burden which attends desertion are still more limited than data as to its extent, but those which are available are significant.

(a) Outdoor Relief:

Only a few charity organization societies have an accounting system which permits an accurate statement of the separate expenditures for desertion cases only. In fact, of the seventy societies affiliated with the National Conference of Charities and Corrections to which separate requests for this information were sent, only three attempted to give it at all accurately. Buffalo found its desertion budget in 1913 to be 6.13 per cent of the whole; in 1914, 8.1 per cent.[1] Columbus, in 1913, expended 6.7 per cent of its funds for desertion; in 1914, 6.1 per cent.[2] Omaha, in 1913, gave 16.2 per cent of the total to desertion; 4.3 per cent in 1914.[3]

New Haven writes: "About one-fourth expended goes to desertion."[4] Minneapolis: "Fully 33 per cent of 1914 expenditures were for deserted wives, but this is only a guess."[5]

Spokane writes: "The amount expended for desertion cannot be accurately figured but it will bear about the same proportion to the total expenditure as the number of desertion cases to the whole number of cases."[6] With the exception of those societies which have a definite policy of discrimination against deserted women this might seem a fair generalization to apply to desertion relief as a whole. Mr. Ralph J. Reed, Superintendent of the Stock Yards District of the United Charities of Chicago, points out, however, that this may very easily be an understatement of the amount. Judging by the experience of his own office, deserted families need help for a longer period of time on the average than other cases. Thus, the amount expended for them is by no means *less* than the percentage which the number of desertions bears to the whole number of cases and is probably *more*, because longer continued.[7]

More light is thrown upon the question by the reports of the Jewish charity societies, which are frequently more satisfactory in the keeping of records concerning desertion than are the Gentile societies. The United Hebrew Charities of New York in 1914 expended 7.85 per cent of their budget, or

1. Letter, February 27, 1915.
2. Letter, March 12, 1915.
3. Letter, April 20, 1915.
4. Letter, February 27, 1915.
5. Letter, February 26, 1915.
6. Letter, March 16, 1915.
7. The experience of the Cook County Agent coincides with that of Mr. Reed. During 1915 his office extended aid to 1,592 deserted families for a total of 7,351 months, or an average of four months and eighteen days per family. Excluding desertion cases, 15,661 other cases were aided for a total of 51,503 months, or an average of three months and eight days per family. In other words, deserted families were aided an average of one month and ten days longer than the average of other cases.—Compiled from records contained in the *Annual Report*, 1915.

$15,829, for desertion relief; and $17,637, or 8.97 per cent in 1913.[1] The United Hebrew Charities of Philadelphia in 1914 expended $4,315, or 11.5 per cent of their budget.[2] The Hebrew Relief Association of the Cleveland Federation of Jewish Charities in 1913 expended $2,015, and in 1914, $2,814 for relief of cases due to desertion.[3] In each case this was 8 per cent of the total expenditure for the year. The Jewish Aid Society of the Chicago Associated Jewish Charities in 1915 gave $28,810, twenty per cent of its total expenditures for the year, for desertion, and $25,645, or 22.98 per cent in 1914.[4]

The last named society through 1913 maintained 61 desertion cases on its pension list at an average cost of $19.06 per month; in 1914, 87 deserted families were kept at an average expense of $14.02 per month; in 1915, 70 desertion cases were kept on the pension list at an average of $19.02 per month.[5] When one understands that three years and six months is the average duration of pension cases which this society has on its files at the present time one may begin to appreciate the dimensions which the financial burden on account of desertion assumes in the case of this one agency.[6]

Scattering as these figures are they serve to convey some idea of the heavy price the community pays for the privilege of permitting men at will to unload the care of undesired families upon its shoulders. But the tale is not complete. We must add to this the expense incurred because of indoor relief.

(b) INDOOR RELIEF:

In 1913 a committee appointed to make a study of family desertion in New York City found

> "that fully 20 per cent of the children committed to orphan asylums in New York City were children of deserting fathers, and that the total amount expended by the municipality for their care approximated $700,000 per annum. This does not include the money expended by the private orphanages to which commitments were made nor the cost of administration. Although no definite information could be had a conservative estimate of the amount thus expended is about $300,000, making the total cost to the community for the care of abandoned children about one million dollars annually."[7]

Mrs. Louis C. Madeira estimates that the cost of caring for deserted children who are cared for in Philadelphia institutions may be placed, conservatively, at $300,000 a year:

> "We have been able to gather figures of institutional children to the number of eighteen hundred and ninety-one (1,891). Of these, five hundred and twenty-two (522) were desertion cases. This would mean twenty-seven per cent (27%), but of course if you take all the institutions of Philadelphia this would not be a true proportion because in the orphanages there is a very small percentage of desertion cases. So for the ten thousand children in institutions in this city, and there are a few over ten thousand (10,000), I think fifteen per cent (15%) would be a fair proportion to charge to desertion cases. If we reckon that these children cost two hundred dollars ($200) per capita for each year, which I think is pretty conservative, it makes the bill which the citizens of Philadelphia are paying for these dependent children, as a result of this one cause of desertion, amount to three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000)."[8]

Cook County, Ills., appropriates $120 a year for each dependent boy and

1. *Annual Reports*: 1914, p. 35; 1913, p. 38.
2. *Annual Reports*, p. 38.
3. *Annual Reports*: 1914, p. 109; 1913, p. 112.
4. *Annual Reports*: 1915, p. 48; 1914, p. 54.
5. *Ibid.;* also 1913, p. 46.
6. *Ibid.*, 1915; compiled from table on page 49.
7. *Report of the National Desertion Bureau*, 1912-1915, p. 3.
8. *Philadelphia City Club Bulletin*, February 12, 1913, p. 245.

$180 for each dependent girl committed to public indoor relief by the Juvenile Court. These are cared for at public expense in sixteen subsidized institutions.[1]

From 1904 to 1914 inclusive the Juvenile Court committed 7,481 boys and 5,338 girls to these institutions,[2] for an average period of two to three years' duration,[3] of whom 18 per cent[4] (997 girls and 1,346 boys) were children deserted by their fathers. The budget for these sixteen institutions in 1914 was $307,558.10.[5] Setting aside eighteen per cent of this amount we find it to be a bill of $55,360.45 paid in that year alone by the taxpayers of Cook County for the support of other men's children—children having living fathers to whom they are entitled to look for support. We have no records sufficiently reliable to quote of what would be added to this amount by private institutions giving free care to deserted women and children.

Evidently a community must pay dearly for the luxury of desertion.

The question might naturally arise as to whether it is fair to charge all of these large expenditures to desertion. What proof can be offered that these children would not have been equally dependent had their fathers remained at home? The record of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations is convincing upon this point:

> "Prior to the organization of the Court of Domestic Relations there was collected for dependent women and children in the city of Chicago an average of not to exceed $12,000 per year. After its organization, when the purposes of the court became well known, many who had heretofore suffered in silence brought their cases to the court, where they obtained relief. Their increases in amounts do not mean that abandonment and dependency are on the increase, but that once an order is entered for support it is complied with promptly. Owing to the complete organization of the court for the collection of the support required the following amounts have been collected and paid:
>
> 1911—$36,679.00
> 1912— 74,904.75
> 1913— 96,537.20"
>
> Of the grand total of $208,121.15 collected for the three years (to be compared with the maximum of $36,000 for any previous three years), $191,515.03 was for abandoned women and dependent children.[6]

The foregoing is evidence of what the deserting husband and father can be made to do to relieve those dependent upon him when he feels the hand of the law. We are justified in supposing that the fathers of deserted children

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1. These institutions are the following schools:
   Amanda Smith Industrial
   Bohemian Industrial
   Bohemian Training
   Catherina Casper Industrial
   Chicago Industrial
   Cook County Kinderheim
   Glenwood Manual
   Illinois Technical
   Ketteler Manual
   Lisle Manual
   Lisle Industrial
   Louise Manual
   Park Ridge
   Polish Manual
   St. Hedwig's Industrial
   St. Mary's Training

2. Records of Cook County Juvenile Court.

3. *Report of the Bureau of Public Welfare of Cook County,* May 1 to December 1, 1914 (unpublished). The report gives this as an approximation, based on an intensive study of 320 cases.

4. *Vide,* percentage statement, p. 29.

5. Comptroller of Cook County, *Annual Report,* 1914, p. 158.

6. From a statement prepared by Mrs. Gertrude Howe Britton, for the voters of Chicago, September 30, 1914.

who are being supported at public expense in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and elsewhere, could do as well if it were required of them.

We are justified in supposing further, that if this $191,515.03 had not been collected and paid to the families that the various charities of Chicago would have been called upon to undertake the care of those who received it, since they would otherwise have been destitute.

B—Moral Cost.

Costly as desertion is seen to be the financial tax it lays is as nothing compared with the moral cost, which cannot be measured in financial terms. For every unhappy consequence of desertion which the members of the abandoned family suffer there is a corresponding one for the community as a whole, and one more far reaching in its effects.

"Neglected children," said Mr. Wm. H. Baldwin, in speaking before the Rhode Island Conference of Charities and Corrections in 1913, "often take from the community more than would have been required properly to nourish them."

(a) There are persons who hold that a mark of a city's greatness is the completeness of its provision for the care of its dependents and delinquents, as evidenced in the great benevolent institutions and adequate reformatories. We ought rather, as Lady Drummond of Montreal has pointed out, to regard those as signs of weakness, because they show that we allow conditions to exist that are not physically and morally fit. "The truest test of a city's sense of responsibility is its decreasing need for social institutions and the facility which it offers for the making and keeping of homes."[1] Insofar as desertion throws dependents and delinquents upon the community it increases the need for such institutions and detracts from the city's moral values.

(b) However unhappy and injured those children may be whom desertion has forced into the ranks of the premature wage-earners, their physically broken and uneducated childhood means a depleted and incomplete adulthood which will react even more injuriously upon society as a whole. Not humanitarianism solely, but a consciousness that the group at large is drawing upon its human principal when it sacrifices its children, is responsible for the increasing demand for legislation which will safeguard the interests of the child.[2]

(c) Already we suffer as a nation in consequence of the disrepute into which certain ideals of family life have fallen. High ideals cannot be expected to come from homes which are themselves disrupted. No period of life is so impressionable as that of childhood, and we may expect that the seeds sown in the child's mind from the degrading conditions which atend desertion will bear fruit and be continued from generation to generation. Lowered ideals, gained from intimate experience with desertion as children, may mean casual and misfit marriages in future with a cumulative toll to be expected of divorce, desertion, crime and unhappiness. Low ideals of marriage and citizenship lower the quality of the citizens who hold them, and make them less valuable to society. Society, in turn, is weakened to the extent that such citizens enter into its structure.

(d) Just as a defective sewer taints the surrounding atmosphere will a defective family life taint the moral atmosphere. Where desertion is prevalent there is an attendant lowering of the moral tone of the locality, a tendency toward a general disregard for other social values, such as mark any community

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1. *Proceedings of the Canadian Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1912, p. 79.

2. "The life, health, vigor and training of each and every young person is a matter of great importance to the nation. Child labor laws are forms of social insurance. If children are overworked and underfed, if they are given inadequate opportunity for healthful play and enjoyment, if children are forced to become wage earners in early youth, the inevitable fruitage will be stunted, inefficient and apathetic men and women. England is today paying the penalty for grinding out young lives in her mines and factories. The warriors who charged with the Light Brigade, or who stopped the hosts of Napoleon at Waterloo, have gone, and their places cannot be filled by the prematurely aged toilers in shop and mine." F. T. Carlton, *op. cit.*, pp. 400-401.

which is in other ways accustomed to disregard principles of law and order. If a "satisfactory" outcome of desertion becomes common it may prove contagious and tempt other men to resort to it; it may finally become endemic.

(e) "The unanchored husband" cannot suffer personal demoralization without reacting harmfully upon society. Freedom from home ties illegally gained finds him footloose to swell the ranks of anti-social men. The community must expect no more consideration at his hands than his neglected family has received. It must be prepared to receive additional damages from his law disregarding impulses.[1]

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1. Mrs. A. W. Solenberger in her graphic description, *One Thousand Homeless Men,* has made this clear. Of the one thousand men whom she studied, 258, more than a fourth, were or had been married at the time of her acquaintance with them. "Some wife deserters were among these, but just how many it would be impossible to state, since * * * a number of the men admitted they had 'left' their families, but very few that they had deserted them." P. 228.

A part of these drifting men, filling our large cities, especially in bad weather and times of unemployment, are, as she says, chronic beggars, vagrants, confirmed wanderers or tramps, temporary or chronic dependents, parasites, criminals and imposters, hiding themselves among the homeless throngs and lodging houses.

A conservative estimate places the population of homeless men in Chicago's cheap lodging-house districts at forty thousand. The Health Department of Chicago estimated the number to be not less than sixty thousand during the winter of 1907-'08. *Ibid,* p. 9.

CHAPTER V.

Desertion Types.

1—ANALYSIS BY TYPES AS A METHOD OF STUDY.

In a previous chapter an attempt was made to analyze the conditions giving rise to the phenomenon of desertion. At this point it seems logical to continue the analysis by an attempt to differentiate the types of desertion. All are not of one pattern, as one who is brought repeatedly into contact with them soon learns. In this, as in all other lines of research, a classification of the facts discovered is required in order that we may study them more minutely and understand them better. At first it may seem as though every desertion is in a class by itself; but as familiarity grows one begins to note a recurrence of similar characteristics, and at length to find them falling into definite groups which prove typical. This uniformity makes a classification possible.[1]

The following classification has been attempted on a basis of the nature of the problems presented by the different groups of cases and the fundamental characteristics common to each group. It has been worked out from a study of more than six hundred cases recorded by the Stock Yards' District Office of the Chicago United Charities. It is not claimed that this classification is in any sense final; it would indeed be unfortunate for it to be so regarded. Its purpose has been to point out an important method of study of desertions, in the sincere hope that other and more proficient studies may follow. A final settlement of this perplexing problem will not be possible until there is taken into account the *differences* as well as the *similarities* which the phenomena present.[2]

A—The Spurious Deserter.

The "faked" desertion is by no means a stranger to charity workers. It is not a desertion case at all in the proper sense of the word, for it does not grow out of any real intention on the part of the man to abandon his family. It is noted here only because its appearance sometimes creates confusion in court or at relief headquarters owing to the difficulty in distinguishing it from cases which are bona fide. Sometimes stress of circumstance, but more frequently a desire to get something for nothing, induces man and wife to pretend a desertion which in fact does not exist. The expenses of childbirth are sometimes met by some philanthropic agency while the father is near by and watchfully awaiting developments. Where fuel and provisions have been provided in time of need instances are familiar of the father and husband coming in to enjoy them under cover of night.

William Morris and family came to the attention of the society for the first time in June, 1908. Although Morris was a sturdy and able bodied fellow, various streaks of bad fortune made it impossible for him to furnish his family at all times with the necessities of life. For five years, intermittently, they were fed and clothed by the society. Morris seemed to regard the society as equal to every emergency, and worthy of all confidence. His faith expanded as time passed. Attempts to care for the family's needs himself seemed less and less worth while. At length further aid was refused as the only means of placing the responsibility upon Morris, where it belonged. Two days after the agency's ultimatum Mrs. Morris came to the relief office with

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1. The first classification of deserters published in the United States was that of the Special Committee on Wife Desertion, appointed by the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity. In the committee's report five types of deserters are given: Chronic, Reclaimable, Spurious, Half-excusable, and Un-get-at-able. *Vide, Bulletin of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity,* January, 1903, pp. 6-14.

2. The illustrative cases which follow have been taken principally from families known to the United Charities of Chicago, fictitious names being used.

an absolutely new tale of woe. Morris, of all men, had deserted and left his unhappy family to starve! However, her unqualified refusal to co-operate in prosecuting him was in itself suspicious. A month later she again refused decisively to take action against him. A visit made about this time, in spite of the distressing picture conjured up by the story, revealed no distress although aid had been refused all the while. An unexpected visitor still later trapped the careless Morris within his own house, and he could do nothing but acknowledge the deception.

This type of "desertion" is one of the most distinctive products of city life. It does not grow out of conditions of domestic friction or unhappy family life. It is a direct product of improperly administered charity, and will disappear automatically when relief is organized and given in such a way as to prevent abuse.

Unwise relief not only encourages the family to persist in this deceitful policy of collusion; it encourages others to take it up, and so augments the very evil it is seeking to relieve. Miss Ella Kahn of the Chicago Jewish Aid Society, after investigation of one hundred cases coming under the care of the organization, says:

> "Proof of collusion was found in ten of the one hundred cases; evidence of it in many others, and it exists doubtless in many where evidence is lacking."[1]

B—The Gradual Deserter.

Desertion is by no means always intentional. Previous separations of a perfectly legitimate character may wean husband from wife and grow gradually—almost accidentally—into desertion. This form of desertion is most likely to appear when the nature of a man's employment takes him away from home for extended periods. Accordingly we find it most commonly among two groups: the casual laborer, who is driven from place to place in search of work; and the immigrant who seeks to better his fortunes in another country.

The casual laborer. The modern industrial system, with its increasing efficiency of production, is at the same time a cause of increase in casual employment, growing out of "industrial maladjustments which arbitrarily throw out of work the deserving and undeserving, the efficient and inefficient, the skilled and unskilled."[2]

The result of casual employment is the necessity, more and more apparent, for men to search for work in different parts of the country. Being obliged to travel extensively in order to find it, families must be left behind and long separations must be incurred. Unemployment may lead the bread-winner into distant towns or states in search of occupation. Failure to find it may keep him going further afield. A sense of shame possibly, will restrain him from returning home with empty pockets; or possibly he cannot raise funds to cover the expense of going back. Weeks of separation grow into months; at length he becomes accustomed to being away from his family and finds it no hardship. He is free from responsibility for them at such a distance and they seem less and less necessary to his well-being as time goes on. Probably the absentee has kept only slightly in touch with his family, if at all, by correspondence, for letter writing at best is a task for him, and there is really nothing much to write except of hard times and of difficulty in getting work. At length trace of him is lost altogether and he may never return at all. Starting out with the best intentions in the world and with the real interest of his family at heart he has gradually come to regard his home as an unimportant detail of his life. Or if he does not actually desert

1. Paper (unpublished) read before a conference of Chicago Jewish charity workers, February 23, 1914.

2. Adams and Sumner, *Labor Problems*, p. 169.

on the occasion of his first absence or so, a mental preparation for a subsequent desertion is afforded by the periods of separation.[1]

Mrs. Kittell ascribes John's desertion very largely to this. Two years ago he went to Colorado and obtained work in a coal mine. She heard from him occasionally. He even sent a little money now and then; not enough to live on by any means, but enough to indicate that he remembered he had a family. During eight months of absence apparently he did not feel any essential lack in his life because of being away from his wife and eight children. But at last he fell sick, and in the rough mining camp where there was no one particularly interested in giving him the attention he needed he began to feel that home had its advantages after all. His own selfish necessity brought him back. In three months he was fully restored and ready for the road again. His family, an asset in the time of his extremity, was a liability now that he was expected to assist in its support. His prior absence had served to give him a feeling of indifference to family cares, and made him more ready to shed responsibility a second time. No economic necessity, such as had taken him to Colorado originally, was the excuse this time, for work was available in Chicago. "He just got drunk and left," said Mrs. Kittell. An unkind letter came from him a few days after his departure; a month later he wrote briefly from Birmingham, Alabama. Since then more than a year and a half have passed and the silence is unbroken.

Desertions growing thus gradually out of the exigencies of casual labor are numerous. They may be said to be a direct result of conditions of irregular employment characteristic of our large cities, necessitated by the present industrial system. A large part of it will disappear when industrial conditions cease to compel long continued separations between the casual laborer and his family. Society must share with the husband the guilt of a desertion which is due to conditions socially conditioned and not wholly within the control of the family.

The immigrant. Difficult as it is to deal with the gradual deserter who has gone to another part of the country this particular type presents a still more perplexing problem when he has come from a foreign land. Thousands of immigrants of all nationalities come to our shores every year. A considerable number of them are not able to bring their families although coming with honorable intentions of sending for them at the first opportunity. Many of them do so; but many others become estranged from the old life and home by the novelty and glitter of the new, and gradually cease to care for their families left behind. "Americanization," in their cases meaning a taste for brighter lights, fancier clothing, more stirring amusements and less confined life, is not long in being acquired. The simple life at home comes to seem slow and dull. Plain, hard-working Francisca or Gretchen in the Old Country cannot compare in style with their modernized counterparts in the cities of America. So the new crowds out the old.

Michael Peppo was born and reared in a quiet, village community of Italy. He came from a good family, sober, of industrious habits. His uneventful life followed an even tenor and nothing intervened to break into it until his marriage to Rafaella. She was very young, only fourteen, whereas he was twenty-four; but in addition to her natural charm for him the fact that she was in trouble appealed to his sympathy. Her father had just been sentenced to twenty-five years in prison for an accidental homicide, and possibly Peppo

1. "While certain men [of those who came to the office for aid] admitted having left their families, very few would own to having deserted them. They claimed that they had left in order to find work and professed an intention of returning soon. This claim was made even in instances by men who admitted that they had not written to their homes nor heard from them in five years or more, and acknowledged that their wives knew nothing of their whereabouts. Unquestionably a number of these men had, in fact, left their homes with the sole intention of seeking work, but having failed to find it, and having in time become tramps and vagrants had felt ashamed to return in their penniless and degraded condition. They continued to wander until even vague intentions of going back 'some day' had left their minds and all responsibility for the support of their families had been abandoned. Effort was often made to persuade men of this class to return to their families, but I do not recall an instance in which it was successful." Mrs. Solenberger, *One Thousand Homeless Men*, p. 23.

was stirred by a feeling of chivalry at the thought of giving her the protection which her father could no longer afford. When they had been married but a little while the desire seized him to go to America as so many of his fellow-countrymen were doing, and make a real home for himself and his girl bride. That was in 1898. He stayed five years without sending for Rafaella, and without sending a single *soldo* for her support. But he had not forgotten her entirely, for in 1903 he returned to Italy on a visit. He promised on his departure, less than a year later, that he would send for her soon. Ten years passed this time, with neither passage money nor support forthcoming. All the while the older brothers of Rafaella had kept her from starvation, one of whom had also come to the United States in the meantime. It was a relief all around when, at the end of this decade of waiting Peppo sent word for her to join him in America. However, he thoughtlessly failed to send money on which to come, and it was by hard scraping that Rafaella was able to get enough personal effects together to sell for the price of a steerage ticket to New York and the cheapest available transportation to Pennsylvania, where her husband was at work. After fifteen years of waiting, and by paying her own way across, Rafaella knew at last what it was to have at hand a husband, and a father for her children. There were two *bambinos* now; one had been born shortly after each of Peppo's two trips to America. But her pleasure in having him was not to last. So many years of freedom from domestic responsibilities made family cares irksome, so Peppo moved on again, this time to Chicago, leaving a good job to do so. On money furnished by her brother Rafaella followed, but Peppo had news of her coming before she arrived and fled again, sending word that he would never again live with her.

In the United Kingdom desertion through emigration reached such startling proportions that in 1911 a resolution was adopted by the Imperial Conference expressed in the following terms:

> "That in order to secure justice and protection of the wives and children who have been deserted by their legal guardians either in the United Kingdom or any of the Dominions, reciprocal legal provisions should be adopted in the constituent parts of the Empire in the interests of such destitute and deserted persons." [1]

In Glasgow alone, for the year ending May 15, 1912, 340 cases of "colonial" desertion were recorded, all of which were accomplished as emigrations. In 124 of the cases investigation showed that the wives had knowledge beforehand of the proposed emigrations which subsequently became desertions.[2]

Mr. Hugo E. Varga has pointed out the three courses, one of which the immigrant is apt to adopt after absence from his family has grown into a definite desertion.[3]

> i. He may live in adultery with another woman.
>
> ii. He may institute divorce proceedings against the wife in Europe; and owing to our lax divorce laws which lend him aid he is usually successful in securing it, for at present we have no adequate way of guarding against injustices which may arise in such case from uncontested suits for divorce. A totally unsuspecting wife across the sea waiting patiently and trustfully for summons to join her husband, may easily be divorced without her knowledge.
>
> iii. Sometimes illegal marriage is effected in the United States without going to the trouble of getting a divorce from the wife abroad. In addition to leaving a destitute family across the ocean this act of bigamy, if uncovered, may result in a great deal of legal complexity because of the two sets of wives and children. When, as sometimes happens, the abandoned family appeals to the American minister or consul where they are, an international complication may arise.

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1. Quoted by Jas R. Motion, *Wife and Family Desertion: Emigration as a Contributory Cause*, p. 3.

2. *Ibid.*

3. "Desertion of Wives and Children by Emigrants to America," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1912, p. 257.

We in America are guilty of contributory negligence insofar as we permit such things as these to take place with impunity. We have ourselves added to the burdens of a society across the sea.

Upon our own society there is a vicious moral effect. Not merely the hardship and suffering which is brought in this way to numbers of wives and children is a result; the low standard of morals which our indifference encourages reacts most harmfully upon our own American communities. Crime of various sorts—fraud, bigamy, adultery, perjury—are fostered; and our negligence in allowing them to be overlooked may engender a general disregard for the law among those who profit by our carelessness. Moreover, the country is robbed of a healthy domestic life to the extent which such offenses as Mr. Varga has outlined may deprive it of the beneficial presence of families belonging to immigrants. Because of the international phases of the problem presented it is difficult at present to bring these offenders to justice, and legal administration is burdened accordingly.

Here, again, in the immigrant and "colonial" deserter we have a condition where family disintegration is directly traceable to industrial and social conditions which are fostered by the restless life of cities. If the immigrant were to bring his family with him, and especially if he were to settle outside of cities where his wife would be not merely a comfort but an economic asset as well, probably the family relation would remain intact.[1]

The problem of the gradual deserter, both of the casual laborer and of the immigrant, seems to be one of *keeping husband and family together.* Dissatisfaction with each other is not the original cause; the factors responsible at first are the objective circumstances which compel them to live apart, and so afford an opportunity for indifference and unpremeditated neglect to widen the chasm into complete separation of life. The underlying remedy for this type of desertion is a change of conditions so that they may keep together.

C—The "Intermittent Husband."

The descriptive expression, "intermittent husband," has been employed by charity workers to characterize a type of deserter who, of all others, is most trying to the soul. By no means all men who deliberately abandon families plan to make the separation permanent. A lasting separation from the family is as undesirable to them in many cases as a permanent residence with the family would be. The home is the port from which the ship may sally forth when affairs are dull or unpleasant on shore; it is a haven to which the vessel may return when weary of buffetings at sea. They may slip their moorings in the stress of anger with the express intention of never coming back, but as anger lessens and absence palls the intention fades.

(a) The Periodic Deserter.

Not quite with the degree of predictability characterizing the solstices and equinoxes, but with something approaching it, is the periodic deserter who may be counted on to depart at stated intervals or upon certain occasions.

Certain seasons of the year, according to reports from the relief offices, seem more likely to produce desertion than others. The first chill of winter is the signal for many desertions each year. Husbands leave for a more favorable climate and to avoid the additional economic strain which cold weather brings. With others the effect is just the reverse; cold weather drives them into the shelter of the home which was neglected when weather was fine. Consequently the opening up of early summer will recall some deserters to assume the family relationship, because the season makes the obligation less arduous; others, arousing from their hibernation in the sheltered domestic fold, fare forth again in pleasant weather.

Mrs. Stanley reports that for the past four years Stanley has abandoned

1. "Personally, as a preventive measure, I am of the opinion that the emigration of married men without their wives should be discouraged as much as possible, as we have seen how, when once they get abroad, so many of them give way to intemperance and vicious excesses solely because they are out of reach of home and family influences." Jas. R. Motion, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

her each summer, but has not failed to return with fall "to sit by the fire all winter," apparently under the impression that if he can manage to support himself without expense to her half the year she ought not complain about providing for him for the other half.

Inhuman as it is, many men may confidently be relied upon to desert on each occasion of their wives' confinement, unable or unwilling to face the problem of financing the additional expense.

Mrs. Carrothers can testify to the unhappiness of such a situation. Not once, but three times, she has experienced the unnatural negligence. She is by no means an ideal housewife, her home is not one which a husband could feel proud to exhibit, and she is herself a sloven; but these faults have not been the ones which Carrothers found intolerable. In fact he had never known anything else before he married her. The back-breaking straws have been the three occasions, in 1910, 1912 and 1914, when Catherine, Anna and George came into the world. During his periods of absence the grandparents of the new arrivals have come to the rescue and in a poor way have helped tide over till the father's return.

An extreme case of this is the one reported by Miss Zilpha D. Smith,[1] of the woman who bore nine children, of whom seven had died. The husband had deserted before the birth and burial of each.

(b) THE TEMPERAMENTAL DESERTER.

The temperamental deserter is not quite so regular in his habits of desertion as is the periodic deserter. One may safely predict that his unannounced departure is only a matter of time, but of how long a time cannot be accurately foretold. This individual may be easily thrown out of domestic gear by a quarrel or spree and give vent to his feelings by taking himself off. Or a fit of wanderlust or discouragement may give the immediate impulse for departure. Other men who do not desert are, of course, subject to the same vicissitudes, but some way their reaction takes another shape.

Ben Allen is one of these impulsive deserters, his artistic temperament taking the particular form of expression of "beating up" his family. Four times he deserted before the present occasion, each time leaving physical marks of his displeasure as a souvenir of his going upon Lottie and whichever of his five children happened to be within range at the time. Four times, after intervals of several weeks each during which his temper has somewhat cooled, he has returned.

Miss Brandt's description of the "typical" deserter fits with especial aptness the temperamental type:

> "The typical deserter is not a figure to excite admiration, nor even much interest. He is young, able-bodied, more or less dissipated, capable of earning good wages but rarely in a mood for making the exertion, and, above all, he is lacking in the quality which makes an obligation to others outweigh considerations of personal comfort or preference. This combination of characteristics makes him susceptible to attractions of various sorts; it incapacitates him for dealing in a philanthropic spirit with the elements of discord which exist in every household; and it prevents him from resisting with even an average will the restlessness that is apt to call everyone at times away from the ordinary prose of life. He may be, withal, though he is not always, of a personal attractiveness that makes him a coveted comrade and gives him an advantage with women."[2]

Miss Brandt's picture is a life sized portrait of Joe Fenton. A more worthless, irresponsible scamp than he scarcely lived. That his marriage laid him under obligation to look after Katie's needs apparently never dawned on his consciousness. He worked a little now and then when he felt like it, but in the main the burden of providing for the household was left to his

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 63.

more competent wife. Joe's sole redeeming traits were his good nature and genuine affection for his family. These served to keep peace in the household; and Katie, for all his faults, gave him a cordial welcome when he was about the house. Two or three times after marriage he had been seized with a wanderlust and had gone off for vacations of a week or so, coming back just when Katie thought he had gone for good. More than a year had passed, however, since his previous desertion, and she had begun to hope that he was cured. But it proved not to be so. During a more protracted period of loafing than usual Joe got himself arrested in March of 1915 and sent to the Bridewell for ten days to work out a fine for disorderly conduct. He was released to find his wife and baby living on aid from the United Charities and the landlord threatening eviction. At such a discouraged moment as this Joe's dark inward reflections were illumined by a letter from his happy-go-lucky brother:

Fort Morgan Colo 4-18-15

Dear Brother Joe.

I have decided to trop you a feiw lines and hope you are well and your family also. I have heart of your troubles but could not helpet. I have left Chi. and went tru Ky. Ind. N. Y. Pa. N. Jerrsey and bak. Mich. Ohio. Ill. Wisconsin Minnesota Iway Mo. Kansas Nebr Colo and I have not done any work since I left I am hapy on the road and it is very fine, I feel like I never will work again onless I have seen all U. S. I am on my way to Californ but I take my time. I ant in horry, you have been traveling, but you have not seen anything yet and you have no experience about Ho Bo life a tall. gee it is fine to be on the Road. It is 10 weeks since I have no home but a Box Car. If you go on the Road again look for my Monogram in the Cars.

RAILROAD JACK.

I will not work very much this Sumer only to bull tru the Coast. It is bienty of work around here, but I dond feel like working yet. I wisht you vas not mareyt and could be with me. I bet you would engoeyet. I hav enofh to eet and a diferent place to sleep every night and feel healty. Wen I stop in some place a week or two, I will write you and wait for a answear. How is my friend Sipsey? If tere had been 3700$ insteaet 37$ that did not help me any. I was broke the secont week. I am going to see the exposition in California and then I am going North East from tere. This is sunday the Stores are closed so I could not buy writing paper. I have seen all, the big Citiys in the states I have been in it. I will be in Denver tomorrow. tell Steve Wagner it was me talking over the phone wen you was in Jaill. I will write you great news the next time. Give my Regwards to all and be well. Your Brother

St.

4-18-145-W RAILROAD JACK[1]

This letter, discovered by his forlorn wife a day or so after he had departed for regions unknown, told the story. With complete disregard for the unhappiness of his little family, and thinking only of how the times were out of joint with himself, he had seized eagerly at the attractive outing suggested by "Railroad Jack" and had gone his way. Whether he carried out his brother's plan of "bulling tru the Coast," and visiting all the "big Citiys" en route, we have no means of knowing; his wife has not heard from him since.[2]

1. Original letter on file in the office of the Stock Yards District of the Chicago United Charities.

2. "The periodical wanderers * * * when the wanderlust attracts them will go on a 'spree' of tramping, not dissimilar in many respects from those of periodic drinkers; for while the lust to wander is upon them, families are neglected, savings are spent and all responsibility is thrown to the winds. Among the families we came in touch with in the district office [Central District, Chicago United Charities] there were a number in which the man was a periodic deserter, and several of these men admitted, when questioned, that they 'took to the road awhile' whenever they abandoned their families. One man, a very fine worker, and, when at home, a kind husband and father, deserted his family at regular intervals just six years apart. His wife was forced to apply to the Bureau for aid during his third absence from home, because continuous illness had exhausted the savings her husband had left her which he had supposed would carry the family through till his return. This man came to the office later and paid the money we had advanced to his wife. He spoke shamefacedly of his wanderings, but said that when the attacks came it was useless for him to try to fight them. He simply 'had to go.'" Mrs. Solenberger, *op cit.*, pp. 121-22.

In some cases the separation may finally become permanent through the unwillingness of the wife to be reconciled. On the books of the Cook County Agent is the record of Mrs. Haynes. Ten times Haynes deserted, leaving her each time with no recourse but charity; ten times, when the mood was upon him, he returned as if nothing had happened and resumed the broken thread of residence at home, and found his wife receptive. The eleventh time the worm turned. Mrs. Haynes, her resolution fortified by the urgent advice of those who had helped her the most, steadily refuses to allow him to return.

In the words of the Philadelphia Committee on Wife Desertion: "After a man has deserted once the habit seems easy to form." Especially is this true where the man returns to find that his family has been comfortably cared for during his absence. Relief societies may well look to it to see that unwise charity does not turn the first-time deserter into a chronic or habitual deserter. In 87 per cent of the cases studied by the Philadelphia committee, where information was recorded, the husband had deserted more than once.[1]

Miss Smith found in her Boston investigation that

> "out of 187 cases where the number of desertions was known, 107 had deserted but once, 34 had deserted twice, nine had deserted three times, 21 had deserted 'several' times, nine had deserted 'many' times, one had deserted four times, three had deserted five times, one had deserted six times, two had deserted seven times."[2]

Miss Brandt's investigation gave the following on this point:

> "Eighty-four of the men were known to have deserted once before the present occasion; 38, twice before; 112, three times or more, of whom 74 had left 'many' times, or 'repeatedly.' If the 122 who had deserted once or twice before be considered on the road to the last class it would appear that 234 altogether, about forty per cent of all, belong to the class of chronic deserters."[3]

Of the 327 cases taken from the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations' files, 218 had no record on this point, two were specifically recorded as having had no previous desertion, and 107 or 33 per cent, were known to have deserted at least once before; how many others may have done so we do not know. The absence of information concerning two-thirds of the entire number makes it impossible to know what proportion of them may be called habitual deserters; but for fifty-one of them this was at least the third offense, in a fair way to be called a habit.

TABLE VI.

PREVIOUS DESERTIONS.

	No. of Men.
1 previous desertion known	56
2 previous desertions known	17
3 previous desertions known	9
4 previous desertions known	5
5 previous desertions known	6
7 previous desertions known	2
9 previous desertions known	2
"Several" previous desertions known	10
Total	107
No previous desertion	2
No record	218
Grand Total	327

1. *Bulletin of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity*, January, 1903, p. 6.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 4.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 13

The element common to the type described as the "intermittent husband" is an excessive lack of a sense of responsibility. A superlative selfishness refuses to take the needs of the wife and the home into consideration when personal comfort or desire suggests departure. As we have seen, this type of deserter does not necessarily require that his family shall have offended him in some way, to provide a justification for his conduct. It is enough that an outside attraction shall present itself. Furthermore, he is not a man who wants a divorce or legal separation. He wants to be free to come back when it suits him, and he would be the last to welcome a divorce court as a solution of his affairs.

The specific problem presented by this type is one of discipline. The husband must be made to see that a family is something more than a mere convenience, to be cared for or neglected at will. The full weight of public disapproval, expressed in the law and executed by the court, must be thrown into the balance against him that he may know his obligations and be compelled to live up to them.

D—The Ill-advised Marriage Type.

A superficial inquiry into the divorce courts of any part of the country is enough to convince one that there are many thousands of marriages which might better never have been contracted. Low ideals of marriage, lack of training for its responsibilities, too brief acquaintance, hasty or unconsidered marriage, diseased or unfit physical condition: these are some of the things which may lead naturally to an early desire to be freed from the bond. The records of hearings before divorce courts are sordid testimony to the lack of healthy ideals concerning marriage in multitudes of men and women who have entered into it.

The records of the Federal Census Bureau upon this point are to the effect that practically one-third (32.1 per cent) of the divorces granted throughout the country between 1887 and 1906 were to couples who had been married five years or less. Twelve and one-tenth per cent were to couples who had been married two years or less.[1]

The point of the foregoing is that marriages which are entered into ill-advisedly will often manifest the fact in early estrangement. This is reflected by the divorce statistics.

In the same way the extent of ill-advised marriages is reflected so far as our records go in a high rate of desertions during the early years of married life. Miss Brandt found that 45.97 per cent of her deserters have been married five years or less at the time of their first desertion; 22.48 per cent, two years or less; 13.42 per cent one year or less.[2]

That there are many persons seeking a way out of marriage so soon after it has taken place is not surprising when one observes on every hand the deplorable ease with which marriage may be contracted in this country between irresponsible persons, and the carelessness and thoughtlessness with which the union is entered by those capable of careful and intelligent consideration. The following news item, appearing in the *Chicago American* under date of August 18, 1915, is illustrative of the lightness with which marriage is popularly regarded:

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1. *Op. cit.*, I, 36. The following statement is made:

"The low number in the first year or two is to be attributed in part at least to the fact that the routine court procedure for obtaining a divorce requires some time, and that desertion, the leading cause, must in many jurisdictions have been of considerable duration before it becomes a legal ground." *Ibid*, I, 38.

Records compiled by Robert M. Sweitzer, Clerk of Cook County, Illinois, from 3,660 divorce cases heard between January 1 and July 1, 1914, show that the largest percentage of petitions for relief in any single year of married life—18 per cent.—comes within the first twelve months of marriage.

2. *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

JUST FURNISH GIRL
CEREMONY IS FREE

Anybody want to take a chance on a free marriage ceremony, free license included? The Commercial Club of St. Charles offers to "supply everything."

There is to be a celebration of "St. Charles' Day" at Pottawatomie Park tomorrow and the committee in charge of the "country store" have issued a call for couples "to get married right on the grounds."

"An inducement of sufficient size will be offered to any couple," says the committee.

The hasty marriage. Mildred Hunter was graduated from Clarksville High School with high honors in a class of two score. She was a belle in the little city of ten thousand where she had lived all her life, and no social activities of the place of any importance were complete without her participation. "Love at first sight" was the diagnosis when she encountered Johnston Freeman, a fascinating transient from St. Louis, on a moonlight hayride the summer following her graduation. Their engagement after the single evening's acquaintance was the result. An elopement and marriage the third day thereafter indicated the swift progress of the romance; and the culmination as well, for in less than three months Freeman's desertion followed, a solution welcomed by all concerned.

The marriage of convenience. The desire to free herself from the necessity of self-support, Mrs. Lamb frankly admits, was the reason of her marriage to Lamb. At sixteen years she was compelled to leave the farm in order to earn her own living by "working out." A position was secured for her in a hotel in Hammond, Indiana. The landlady of the hotel was responsible for the match, arranging for her to meet Lamb, who was one of the boarders, "because he was a butcher getting four dollars a day." This was the first courtship the unsophisticated country girl had ever had and a scant fortnight's acquaintance found them man and wife. Today Lamb is living with another woman. Mrs. Lamb is supporting herself by taking in washing, which she does in her cramped quarters of two rooms off Halsted street.

The forced marriage. Jacob McDaniel and Mary Murphy were reared in the uninspiring atmosphere "back of the Yards," and grew up in a community not conducive to highest morals. In fact, the fathers of both were drinking men, and Jacob's father, especially, had the reputation of being unkind to his wife. The couple had been neighbors and school mates from infancy but were in no sense betrothed at the time Jacob became engaged to another girl who had moved into the community. Before the day set for their wedding, however, Mary's mother discovered that her daughter was pregnant and that Jacob was the one responsible for her condition. Pressure was brought to bear, and five days before her baby was born Mary Murphy became Mary McDaniel. Aside from the gloomy satisfaction of giving the child a name the marriage was a farce, for Jacob never pretended to make a home for his wife and baby. He continued his attentions to the other girl, who was receptive. Eventually they eloped, going to a large city of the middle west where they lived as man and wife.

Forced marriages, loveless, and consummated for the sole purpose of legitimizing the child, are almost foredoomed to failure.

If man and wife find themselves mismated the situation is rendered more acute and the *denouement* more tragic when "another woman" enters the scene. Eighteen of Miss Brandt's 574 deserters were reported to have left home with another woman. "There were 35 other cases in which another woman was believed to have been the explanation of desertion, though the man was not known to have left with her."[1] Marriages thoughtfully entered into and based

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

upon genuine affection, preparation for marriage and adaptability to each other, could hardly have such a termination.[1]

Probably the largest number of permanent desertions are traceable to ill-advised marriages. The ease and casualness with which marriage may be contracted in this country, the lack of safeguards thrown about it, and the general decline of respect for it as an institution make this a typical American desertion. It is not due primarily to city conditions, although they effect it, but to the laxity of ideals common to our national life.

So long as marriage is made a toy of passing whims, to be taken up or discarded as individual impulse dictates; so long as our laws allow it to be undertaken without regard for the responsibilities which attend it; so long as lack of preparation, mental or economic, characterize those who take it up: just so long will the ill-advised marriage type be outstanding wherever desertion is a subject for consideration.

E—The "Last Resort" Type.

A portion of the men who desert are not without excuse. Impulse is not responsible for their departure; they are not lacking in a sense of familial duty; they are not necessarily persons who have contracted thoughtless or ill-advised marriages; they are not of that group who become deserters as it were by accident, without premeditated intent to become so. They are men who have really tried in many ways to adjust themselves to a difficult family situation and have failed. They have finally decided upon desertion because it seemed the only door open. They have weighed the consequences fully and have adopted the expedient as a last resort.

A somewhat extreme instance will illustrate:

The domestic situation in Henry Slokowski's home might well have tried the patience of any man. When he married Anna she was a rather attractive girl, pretty in a cheap way, and apparently as well endowed for the duties of married life as any of the other girls in the Polish community where they lived. It did not take many days of wedlock, however, to reveal that a ready wit which had been one of her charms in her lover's eyes, might, under certain circumstances, add venom to a shrewish tongue. Her easy flow of conversation when it found expression in a deluge of scoldings and abuse was often hard to bear. Henry was a good worker and found no difficulty in keeping employed at wages ranging from sixteen to thirty-two dollars per week; but Anna was unthrifty and the contents of the pay envelope, which he faithfully turned over to her every Saturday night, ran through her fingers with little to show for it. A slovenly, ill-kept house made a proper frame for a slatternly wife. When the children began to come they fitted into the picture, their unwashed little bodies and dirty clothing matching hers. Every night, coming home from work to a half-prepared meal and a disorderly household, Henry faced a volley of abuse because he did not earn more than he did.

Henry patiently endured all this for ten long years. He drank a little occasionally, but not to excess. The social conversation of the Polish saloon where he dropped in for a glass of beer perhaps twice a week, was practically his only recreation or diversion. Even this was made the subject of bitter abuse by his wife. In and out of his hearing she did not fail to inform those who would listen of how lazy he was that he did not earn more, and of how he wasted that little in saloons and beer halls while his neglected family bore the penalty.

Possibly Henry would have gone on to the end in this humble, hen-pecked existence had not Martin Pribiloff appeared on the scene. He had come into the home as a boarder; he remained as Anna's lover. Obviously Henry was in the way; so, as meekly as he had been a husband, he became a deserter. The charities know where he is and know that he would go back today willingly

1. Dr. Devine expresses the conviction that another woman is not the immediate cause of desertion so frequently as has been supposed; that acquaintance with her is more commonly formed after the desertion has taken place and the home ties are broken. She may be a cause of failure to return home. *Principles of Relief*, p. 137.

if Anna would give up Pribiloff,—for he is a man with whom even such a degree of forgiveness is possible. As it is he is a deserter, a man who became so only as a last resort, not knowing what else to do.

Among the poor as among the rich there are scolding and shrewish wives, and extravagant and wasteful wives. In the case of the poor this often means disorderly households bearing no semblance to homes, added to the rest, which eventually leads to desertion where it would lead to divorce among the well-to-do. The "last straw," the immediate occasion of desertion, may be no worse than many incidents which have preceded it. The discomforts of maladjustment in the family may be rather unimportant individually, but at last, sometimes after years, become unendurable. Some deserters of this type, like Henry Slokowski, may be willing to return after a time to try it again, and in some instances their wives may be chastened and improved by the experience. It is more probable, however, that with such men desertion is veritably a "poor man's divorce," having all the elements of finality and complete termination of the union. The marital experience—some unforgiveable circumstance, a man in the case, or home life rendered a torment because of the unendurable characteristics of the other—has so embittered them that reconciliation is not possible.

Such a background of experience evidently belonged to one man to whom Judge Uhlir, of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations, gave the choice of going to the Bridewell or returning to his wife. His answer bespoke vivid impressions of past domestic relations: "Well, Judge, the Bridewell is not so bad!"

Such was the state of mind, apparently, that prompted Antonio Salvatore, a Sicilian immigrant, to the following letter. It was written from an eastern city in response to urgings from the Chicago United Charities that he return and rejoin his abandoned wife and babies:

> "I am asking her [his wife] if she remembers what she has done to me. * * * She wanted to do whatever came into her mind. I do not want her any more. I would rather like to die. She is free now; she may take any young man she likes. If you knew what she has done to me you would think her deserving to be burned alive. My first thought has been that to kill her, but thinking of my children kept me from doing it. I used to carry my revolver whenever I went out with her. Finally I decided to abandon her. She is apt to make you believe that the moon starts from the sea. Nobody abandons his family without a reason. So long as only interests are concerned it does not matter much, but when honor is at play one cannot be indifferent. If your wife had done all this would you live with her? You would either have killed or deserted her also. Ask her if she wants a divorce. In this case I will come and get my children.
>
> "I await a good answer. Greeting you I am"
>
> ANTONIO SALVATORE.[1]

When careful investigation proves that the deserter has been justified in refusing to remain with his wife the matter is one fully warranting a divorce or legal separation, and simple justice to the deserter demands that it shall be granted. The desertion laws of several states specifically state that the penalty provided shall be inflicted only in case the man shall be found "without lawful excuse,"[2] and this is implicit in all of them. Yet at the present time a man may be discharged by the courts as not guilty of "wilful" desertion, and yet remain legally bound to his wife—a legally sanctioned deserter, so to speak.

Generally, although not invariably, the "last resort" desertion is one that occurs after several years of married life, as distinguished from the desertion soon after marriage, characteristic of the "ill-advised marriage" type. As Miss Brandt says, "it is in the first years, while the process of adjustment is

1. Original letter on file in the office of the Stock Yards District of the Chicago United Charities.

2. *E. g.*, Massachusetts; Maryland.

going on and the birth of each child comes as a distinct complication of the economic problem of the family that the strain is greatest."[1] The fact that so large a percentage of those who weather the strain of these first years do subsequently desert gives an added significance to their action when finally taken. Of the 298 cases known to Miss Brandt more than one-fourth had been married more than ten years at the time of their first desertion, and 54.03 per cent had been married six years or more.[2] While it is not correct to assume that every man who waits to desert until he has been married a half dozen years or more is one of the "last resort" type, probably many of them are: men who have been long-suffering and have forsaken their families only when married life became unendurable.

3—THE VANISHED HUSBAND.

Of the 211 Philadelphia deserters the whereabouts of 57 were recorded as unknown, and the committee states, "it is safe to say that to those 57 could be added a large number of the 75 as to whose whereabouts no statement is recorded."[3] Of Miss Brandt's 574 the locations of 310, more than half, were unknown.[4] Of the 3,286 cases brought to the attention of the National Desertion Bureau during its first three years 881, or more than a fourth, were not found after repeated efforts by the Bureau.[5]

As one turns through the case records of relief societies the eye comes repeatedly upon statements to the effect that the husband deserted five, ten, fifteen years ago and "has not been heard of since."

Needless to say, there is no hope of reclaiming a deserter unless he can first of all be located. The problem of "the vanished husband" whom every effort has failed to reveal is so well recognized by some of the states that they have enacted legislation permitting the wife to regard her husband as dead if no news of him is received for a stated period of time. It is true many times that lack of means to prosecute the search, or indifference on the part of the family, results in returning an answer to the investigator to the effect that the deserter's present location is unknown, when a very slight effort might disclose him near at hand. This is made clear by the work of the National Desertion Bureau. The 2,405 deserters which they have succeeded in locating (73 per cent of all cases referred to them) were "vanished husbands" before they were referred to the Bureau for location, and but for the kindly and efficient work of the Bureau they would probably have remained so until they decided of their own accord to reveal themselves.

Strictly speaking this is not a separate type of deserter. The "vanished husband" is any one of the other types who is lost to view.

4—THE RECLAIMABLE vs.

THE IRRECLAIMABLE DESERTER.

Of the 2,405 deserters located by the National Desertion Bureau during the first three years of its existence, reconciliation was effected in 780 cases. In other words, nearly one-third (32.89 per cent) of those who were found were reclaimed through the services of the Bureau. In 101 other cases reconciliations were pending.[6] In the light of experience we are safe in saying that many of these would never have rejoined their families of their own initiative. The report of the Bureau is a hopeful sign. It indicates clearly that desertion is not irremediable, but that where there is the proper machinery

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 59.
5. *Report of the National Desertion Bureau*, 1912-1915, p. 7.
6. *Report*, 1912-1915, p. 8.

for the undertaking a large part of the homes which desertion has disorganized may be rehabilitated, and rehabilitated on the basis of a reconciled family.

The question of the reclamation of deserters is apart from that of their classification. Deserters who may be reclaimed are to be found in every class; deserters whom no efforts can succeed in restoring occur in each as well.

Other things being equal, the "gradual" deserter who did not intend to desert in the first place, and the "intermittent husband" who is accustomed to return at intervals anyway, are more likely to prove reclaimable; the "ill-advised marriage" type and the "last resort" type, both of which have come to regard marriage as a failure, are more likely to prove irreclaimable. But we are justified in regarding deserters of whatever type as reclaimable until circumstances appear on investigation of the individual case which make it appear otherwise.

One of the primary objects of the courts of domestic relations which have been established in New York, Chicago, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Boston, Cincinnati and Philadelphia is the rehabilitation, as far as may be, of homes broken up by desertion.[1] This is the *raison d'être* of the National Desertion Bureau. In theory, at least, this is the objective of every relief agency to which deserted women appeal. The highest end to be sought is rehabilitation on a basis of honest reconciliation between husband and wife, where that is possible and desirable.

Many times reconciliation is not possible; sometimes it is not desirable. This fact must not be blinked. Such are the cases where the deserter cannot be found at all, or if found, is in such a condition as to be unable to care for himself, much less a family; cases where defective children would result from a reunion; cases where the vices, habits or idiosyncrasies of one or both make home inevitably a hell for the other. Shutting our eyes to such conditions does not eliminate them. Reconcilation at all costs is a policy to which, in the interest of the highest social welfare, we cannot consistently commit ourselves.

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1. Detroit formerly had a court of domestic relations, but it was discontinued because found unconstitutional. The Domestic Relations Court was formerly a branch of Division Two of the Kansas City, Missouri, Municipal Court, but it no longer exists.

CHAPTER VI.

Treatment of Desertion.

PHASES OF TREATMENT.

In attempting to deal with the individual case of desertion we are confronted at the outset with two distinct problems. On the one hand is the deserter himself; on the other, the abandoned wife or family.

This natural line of division suggests phases of treatment to correspond: that with reference to the deserter has primarily to do with locating him and persuading him to resume his domestic obligations; that with reference to the deserted family must consider ways and means of maintaining its members until the deserter shall have resumed responsibility for them, or until they have become self-supporting. Any plan of treatment which does not consider both is only partial and does not reach the real objective—that of re-establishing normal familial relations.

Neglect to take both of these sides of the situation into consideration has led in the past to inadequate policies of treatment. On the one hand, the courts have confined their activities largely, wherever they have acted at all, to the purely juridical matters of securing the punishment of the offending husband, and have left the family out of consideration. On the other, the charities, which have helped support the dependent families have, partly of necessity, neglected the possibility of bringing the deserter to task.

A normal family adjustment can be secured only when both of these factors are dealt with successfully. To this end there must be co-operation of effort between those who have each in charge.

A—With Reference to the Deserter.

Desertion or non-support or both are now expressly forbidden by law in every state of the union. This prohibition is supported by a variety of policies of enforcement, and a still wider divergence of opinion exists as to the treatment which should follow conviction for the offense.

(a) Warrant for Arrest.

The first step toward enforcement of the law is to obtain a warrant for the arrest of the offender. If the wife or those interested in her behalf can persuade the deserter to return without legal procedure it is preferable. The warrant should be used only in case persuasion fails, in order that he may not be needlessly antagonized.

There is reason to suppose that a large number of wilful deserters concerning whose guilt there is no shadow of a doubt escape prosecution as a result of failure on someone's part to put the machinery of the law into motion against them.

To what extent is this true?

With this question in mind four hundred cases were taken at random from families known to the Chicago United Charities, and examination was made to ascertain how many of them had ever been taken into court. Forty-three of these were later discarded because information was not available. Of the remaining 357 inquiry showed that warrants had been issued in only fifty-four cases. That is, in 263 or more than 73 per cent of the cases taken without previous information on the point, the law had not been called into service at all.

The reasons for this failure were afterwards looked up in a number of cases and a variety of explanations found:[1]

aa. No warrant issued because the wife "refuses emphatically to take any steps toward her husband's arrest; thinks it a waste of time as he will never keep up any payments which the courts may require, and if he is imprisoned she will gain nothing. Wants the case dropped."

bb. No warrant issued because after consultation with the Legal Aid Society they "decided it was not worth while, that the wife was better off without him."

cc. A case similar to the preceding. Upon advice it was decided that it was better not to bring the husband back as he was a drunken wreck, incapable of supporting himself, much less anyone else.

dd. No warrant issued because the desertion itself took place in another state and so was not under the jurisdiction of the Chicago courts.

ee. No warrant issued because the wife did not want to incur the publicity attending a prosecution.

ff. No warrant issued because the wife was unwilling to institute proceedings against her husband, being still fond of him.

gg. No warrant issued because the wife considers herself fortunate in being rid of a creature who only lived at her expense when at home. Should he return he would probably only become a burden upon her again, a thing which she earnestly wishes to avoid.

hh. No warrant issued because the wife was unable to give the Court of Domestic Relations his address, and they refused to issue one without it. The United Charities tried to locate the man in order to secure a warrant, but failed. Later the Legal Aid Society found him in St. Louis, the expense for his detection being met from private funds. He was found living with another wife, and when questioned repudiated the Chicago marriage. Was not returned because funds for his extradition were not available.

ii. No warrant issued because the wife feared that her brutal husband might take vengeance upon her in some way should she undertake to prosecute him.

A warrant for arrest can be issued only upon complaint of someone eligible to enter a charge. As to who this should be Mr. Baldwin speaks as follows:

> "Any person may make the complaint when an offense against the state has been committed. The agent of any organization interested in such cases already has this right, therefore, and the only question is as to how or when it shall be begun by someone other than the wife. Usually she is the proper one to do this, but when she is deterred by fear, or there is a probability that the chance of reconciliation will be less if she acts, some one else, with a knowledge of the facts, some good probation officer who has been looking after the children, some agent of a Humane Society who has discovered conditions in the family which demand attention, may do so. It is proper to respect family relations when they are normal, but often they are not."[2]

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1. As will be clear from the following, these failures to obtain court action are in no sense a criticism of the United Charities. Under the present operation of the law it would be futile to attempt court action in many cases. In others the family is touched for a brief time only, while relief needs are acute, and soon passes out of notice. Moreover, the United Charities has such a large volume of emergency work each year as to be quite unable, except in a limited number of cases, to do even the preliminary things necessary before a desertion case can be taken up with the court officials.

2. "The Present Status of Family Desertion and Non-support Laws," p. 34. Abstract appears in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1911, p. 406.

NOTE.—The state law of Minnesota expressly provides, however, that no one but the wife can make complaint in such cases.

There is an advantage in having the warrant signed by the wife, for it practically commits her to seeing the prosecution through. If a third person has obtained a warrant relying upon the wife as the main prosecuting witness, it is within her power to destroy the whole case by refusing to testify at the critical moment, her resolution to do so being broken down when she is confronted in court by the husband himself. This is very annoying to those who have carried the case so far in her behalf, especially if time and expense have been required to secure his presence in court. If the wife herself has secured the warrant she is placed in a position where she cannot consistently refuse to carry the proceedings to a conclusion.

A quite natural reluctance exists on the part of some philanthropic societies to initiate legal proceedings. They feel, and properly so, that their ability to serve the needy may become prejudiced if they become mixed up in the courts, and that their standing in the community may be injured if they gain a reputation for doing so. This difficulty may be gotten around by having the warrant sworn out in the name of one of the agents of the society as a private individual rather than in the name of the society itself.

No set rules can be made, therefore, as to who shall institute proceedings. The question must be decided in the light of the facts of each case as it arises. Assuredly the society should not commit itself to the position that it will under no circumstances agree to prosecute. As it is at present, with the wife unwilling or afraid to take action, and the societies themselves refusing to do so, men may and do escape through very lack of someone to take out warrants against them.

A regretable feature of some of the courts, of which the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations is one, is their refusal to issue warrants for the arrest of deserters even when earnestly requested to do so, unless a probable address can be given. Thus another loop-hole of escape is furnished men who are sufficiently careful to keep a knowledge of their whereabouts from their families. By the very nature of the offense these families, the ones most interested in the deserters' apprehension, are the ones least apt to know where the wanderers are. To require them to locate the deserter before a warrant is issued would be ludicrous if not so serious.

What a farce our entire legal system would be if this policy were applied to all criminals; if warrants for arrest were never issued unless the address of the person wanted were definitely known! With a strange inconsistency our courts, which are willing to undergo great trouble and expense to locate a bank-robber or a house-breaker, and which often scour the continent in search for a suspected forger, are comparatively indifferent to the crime of desertion. From the standpoint of community self-interest wilful desertion is more to be deplored than many other crimes. Its effects are far reaching. Not only by its creation of dependents does it throw a more general burden upon the community than does the mere looting of a till, but by its injury to the family it strikes at the foundations of national integrity. The emphasis which regards desertion as a trivial offense is indeed unfortunately placed.

By all means the issuance of a warrant for a deserter should be made as easy as for any other criminal. No change in the law is required to bring this about since desertion and non-support or both are already statutory offenses. The change required is in the attitude of those who are sworn to uphold the law. The creation of courts of domestic relations is a big step in the right direction, but greater efficiency in this regard is possible.

(b) Location and Apprehension.

The attitude on the part of the courts which has been described has led in some cases to a feeling of immunity on the part of the deserter. So far from considering himself a fugitive from justice—as one who is guilty of a criminal offense should be made to regard himself—the sole care may be to keep himself out of the immediate reach of his family.

Mrs. Selz, for example, has known for two years that Fred is "somewhere on the North side." At rare intervals, once every six months or so, he comes

over to his old neighborhood, meets his two children as they come from school, visits with them briefly on the street corner, gives them candy and chewing gum, and goes his way. Mrs. Selz does not know her husband's address and her facilities for finding it are limited. She is a detective neither by instinct nor training; and the big city, beyond the restricted limits of her immediate neighborhood, is a Cretan labyrinth. But the police could locate him on twenty-four hours' notice should they at any time be seriously charged with the task. When the deserter has so little fear of the law that he does not consider it worth while to leave the community to make himself safe experienced officers would not find his apprehension a difficult matter.

In the main, deserters do not take a chance of remaining within the jurisdiction of the court. They exercise care to keep their location unknown, and go to other cities or states where they cannot so easily be found. This necessitates an especial machinery for finding them out akin to that for locating other criminals. Every means which is employed by the law in locating criminals of other types should be used in locating the deserter who has fled court jurisdiction. This work is essentially that of police and detective officers. They have the equipment, the experience and the system for undertaking it.

If the man is a first offender, or if the chances for reconciliation are better if legal pressure is not resorted to, the charities may volunteer to locate him on their own initiative, and turn the case over to the authorities only if they do not succeed; particularly if the man is thought to be somewhere within easy reach. But this is not the major office of charitable societies; they are not equipped for the work, and whatever money or energy they expend in this way is diverted from important labors of another character.

When the courts are indifferent or negligent about taking up cases to which their attention is properly called the charities are in a difficult position. If they make an effort to locate deserters and to induce them to rejoin their families, it is at the expense of other duties; and because they are limited as to the legal pressure which they can bring to bear the success of their efforts is by no means assured. If, on the other hand, they do not make such an effort, they must inevitably suffer from the impositions of families with questionable claims to assistance.

This problem of "the vanished husband," so perplexing to the average charity society in the absence of proper support from the courts, has been faced squarely by the National Desertion Bureau. This organization for dealing with deserters of the Hebrew race, has grown out of the activities of the National Conference of Jewish Charities. Expressed in the words of its Secretary and Counsel, Mr. Monroe M. Goldstein, the Bureau has

> "formulated a method for locating deserters, established a network of committees and agencies throughout the country and abroad, marshalled such publicity forces as would aid in locating deserters, and organized a comprehensive system not alone to locate deserters but to enable it to deal with the individual cases until a definite and constructive result has been procured. Equally important was the establishment of a system to follow up the results obtained in the individual cases; this meant the investigation of homes, economic and social conditions, study of the charity budgets for deserted families, and included the organization of a competent legal staff to deal with that part of the work which required the prosecution of offenders."[1]

Since its establishment in February of 1911 the Bureau has instituted the most comprehensive and far reaching method yet put into operation in the United States for making desertion unpopular. It has succeeded in creating an atmosphere of danger for Jewish deserters. The secret of its success is largely found in the system of merciless publicity given this class of delinquents. A "Deserters' Gallery" of photographs of men who are wanted under this charge is kept running in the leading Jewish periodicals of this country and

1. *Report*, 1912-1915, p. 7.

Canada, with as minute a description of the men as is possible to secure. It is difficult for concealment or an incognito to be long continued with these advertisements going into every Jewish community in the country. About one hundred and fifty Hebrew agencies in the United States and elsewhere cooperate in this policy, reporting to each other as information is secured. The fact of discovering themselves to be listed in the columns of wanted husbands is enough to lead some men to give up the fight for concealment and to return home. If a man upon discovery by the Bureau does not yield to moral persuasion the Bureau itself undertakes action against him and compels by means of law what the deserter would not do of his own volition.

The success of the Bureau in its work of location and apprehension may be read in the reports of its first three years of work. From June 1, 1912 to June 1, 1915, the Bureau handled 3,286 cases. Two thousand four hundred and five men, or 73 per cent., were located, being traced to 239 different cities of the United States, Canada, England, Austria, Argentine Republic, Cuba, Barbadoes, Hungary, Holland and Palestine.[1]

These figures bear eloquent testimony to the possibilities of dealing with desertion when the work is undertaken by serious and organized effort. This sort of work should be handled by the legal agencies of the government as a part of the system of social protection. Because the law fails to make provision for the work private gifts are making possible the work of the National Desertion Bureau. In the meantime the Gentile population, inadequately protected by the law, and not possessing a desertion bureau of its own, continues to have its cases handled ineffectively, and consequently can report no abatement of the evil.

(c) Return to Jurisdiction.

The majority of those who desert are of the class which Mr. Goldstein calls "nomad husbands." They do not take up residence in the same city, but for the sake of greater security leave the community entirely. Their freedom is still more secure if they go to another state, from which they cannot be taken without a process of extradition. Two features contribute to this security: first, the general unwillingness of states to extradite a man for so "trivial" an offense as desertion; second, the lack of available funds for returning the deserter to the city where his presence is wanted.

By a resolution adopted by the Conference of Governors on Inter-state Extradition at New York in 1887, the chief executives of the several states went on record as to the first of these:

> "*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this Conference that the governors of the demanding states discourage proceedings for the extradition of persons charged with petty offenses; and that except in special cases, under aggravating circumstances, no demand shall be made in such cases." [2]

Because desertion is regarded as a "petty offense" there has been a tendency on the part of the several governors—in whose hands rests the sole power of granting requisitions for extraditions—in accordance with the spirit of the resolution of 1887, to discourage the extradition of deserting husbands.

But even should permission for extradition of a deserter be secured, as it sometimes is, a still more effective obstacle to securing his return is found in the lack of funds to cover the expense involved. Judge Joseph Z. Uhlir experienced this difficulty while on the bench of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations:

> "In addition to the changes in the law there is also needed an appropriation from the county funds for the arrest and return of deserting husbands who have fled to other states. Running away is such an easy method of avoiding trouble with wife and the law that cases of this sort

1. *Report*, 1912-1915, pp. 119, 120 and 121.

2. Quoted by Wm. H. Baldwin, "The Present Status of Family Desertion and Non-support Laws," p. 17. Abstract appears in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1911, p. 406.

> are extremely numerous. The deserting husband may of course be brought back, but it costs money, and that is lacking. I took up the matter * * * but I am sorry to say that the Commissioners [of Cook County, Ills.] saw fit to make appropriation of one thousand dollars only. Much has been accomplished with the small sum available, and if a larger sum could be obtained, so that the deserter might almost uniformly be brought back, the number of desertions would decrease very rapidly."[1]

Charity agencies which are interested in giving material relief to the deserted family cannot afford to expend their funds for the purpose of bringing back the husband. Rarely are friends and relatives found who are able to bear the expense. Least of all is the abandoned wife, so frequently an object of charity herself, able to furnish the requisite cash. For the Gentile population there is no National Desertion Bureau to provide the expenses of extradition after requisition has been granted. Yet funds are available for the extradition of sufficiently "important" criminals of every other shade. It is a singularly shortsighted policy not to make ample provision from public funds for this purpose. The expense of supporting the family during the husband's absence may be in excess of the cost of returning him to jurisdiction. But since the latter would have to come from the public treasury, and the former is usually met by private charity, the disposition has been to let the private agencies bear the burden. If some way were devised for throwing the care of deserted families solely upon the public treasury it would soon be forced upon the consciousness of the officials that the more economical way would be to get the man at all hazards.[2]

(d) Policy Following Conviction.

Let us suppose that a deserter has been clumsy or unfortunate enough to fail of the advantage of the many loop-holes for escape afforded by the law and our negligent administration of it. A warrant, grudgingly though it may have been, has been issued for his arrest; for once his concealment has failed to grant him immunity; he has been seized and taken before the court, and his guilt, without extenuating circumstances, has been established. How must he be dealt with following conviction?

In the language of Dr. Robert H. Gault, editor of *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*:

> "Ordinarily the offender and the individual or individuals who are injured, have diverse interests. The punishment of the former, therefore, does not interfere with the welfare of the latter. Indeed, the injured may experience a degree of satisfaction because of the legally inflicted discomfiture of the offender." In desertion cases, however, "the plaintiff and defendant are representatives of a particular family—a particular unit in our social organization. This being the case * * * we ought here to be particularly zealous lest in applying correctives we enhance that suffering of wife or children or both, on account of which the action was brought."[3]

If imprisonment is inflicted upon the deserter under the present system in Illinois and many other states it means that the family is deprived of all hope of support from him during the period of his sentence. Such a policy gives rise to a great economic waste: the man supported in jail at the expense of the public, often in totally unproductive idleness; and the family confirmed in its dependency since the law has taken away its main hope for an independent support.

If a fine is imposed it will have to be paid with money which might far

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1. *Report on the work of the [Chicago] Court of Domestic Relations*, 1913-14, p. 9.

2. "The money saved to the state by refusing to pay extradition costs must be paid in another form by the public or private charities, and usually with most usurious interest." *Proceedings of the Seventh Maryland Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1911, p. 105.

3. Editorial, November, 1912.

better be applied to the need of the neglected family. In either case the brunt of the penalty will fall upon them. Moreover, such a penalty may very easily cause the man's heart to be hardened against his family; punishment may only serve to make the breach in the family wider and prevent for all time the reconciliation of husband and wife, which is a part of the objective sought.

A policy is required which will make restoration of normal domestic relations and a prevention of future ruptures, and not punishment, the chief end of treatment. With a purpose of working out such a policy there have been established in various cities of the United States[1] courts of domestic relations based on "a more just and sympathetic treatment of each offender," "not less just because more intelligent and sympathetic." The animating purpose is "not only to secure support, but also patiently to acquire and maintain such a knowledge of each case as will enable him [the judge] to remove the causes of non-support and restore the normal family relations by the use of all means at his command."[2] Protection of home ties rather than punishment of the offender is the aim of the court.[3]

In many cases—such is the testimony of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations—the family is reunited not because of any fear of the law in the offender's heart, but because the court has acted simply and naturally in the capacity of friendly mediator between estranged husband and wife. The elements of reconciliation were already there, and a go-between was all required to accomplish it.

Others there are of the "irreconcilable" type who will under no circumstances resume life at home, or whose wives will not consent to their return. Persons are not lacking who maintain that the law should be brought to bear to compel obstinate ones to live together again. Such a policy does not seem wise. Human nature being what it is, happiness is not induced by compelling incompatibles to dwell together. Indeed, it may in certain cases be the duty of the domestic relations courts to make certain that husband and wife shall *not* live together again by assisting to secure them a legal separation or absolute divorce. Cases where reunion can only mean a renewed round of household abuse and harmful influences upon the children, or the quartering upon the wife of a worthless husband who must be supported; cases where it would mean the bringing of defective children into the world. In any event, whether a reconciliation is effected or not, the deserter should be required to contribute to his family's support; voluntarily if he will, under compulsion if his consent cannot be obtained. The interest of society is not a sentimental one, for society will have to make a living for the family if he does not, unless they have other resources. Under the law he assumed responsibility for his family when he married his wife. He is responsible for his children's existence in the world. The law must see that he does not let them come to want, even though it may not wisely compel him to share their domicile.

The policy of the domestic relations courts is to put the deserter under

1. *Vide*, p. 50.

2. Wm. H. Baldwin, "The Court of Domestic Relations of Chicago," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, September, 1912.

3. "In dealing with infractions of the law, the Court of Domestic Relations does not aim principally at punishing the offender, but at working out such a solution of the whole problem as to prevent its recurrence, if possible, or to remove the causes of it. What the judge of this court needs, is not so much profound erudition in the technicalities of the law, as a sympathetic knowledge of human nature and an instinctive recognition of the right method of handling the individual offender. As a distinguished English visitor expressed it, the judge must be a wise Eastern *kaadi*. A plain, friendly talk will convince one man that he has behaved badly, and he begs forgiveness of his wife and promises the judge to keep away from liquor or whatever the cause of the trouble may be, while another man gets more stubborn, if the judge is inclined to show him leniency. Sometimes a mere taste of imprisonment will tame a defiant husband. He is sentenced to six months in the House of Correction, and the bailiff locks him up temporarily in a back room. It is wonderful what effect a few hours' confinement will have. The man begins to figure out how long six months must be if two hours seems an infinity, and when later in the day he is again brought before the judge, he is a broken man and sincerely anxious to deserve the clemency of the court. It goes without saying that the judge makes extensive use of the probation act. Sending the man to jail or workhouse leaves the family generally in destitute circumstances. So the sentence is suspended, and the offender placed on his good behavior, under the supervision of an adult probation officer." Judge Joseph Z. Uhlir, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

order to contribute regularly to the support of his dependents, and to reserve punishment as a last resort, inflicting it only as an alternative when the husband proves unwilling to resume his obligations, or having agreed to, when he breaks his promise.[1]

For those men who are not amenable to anything less than punishment special provision should be made. It is not enough that they be locked up for an unproductive period in county jail or city Bridewell and the family left to fend for itself or fall back upon charity. Some way should be devised whereby the delinquent may be made to contribute to his family's support while undergoing punishment.

The law in the District of Columbia makes non-support "a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not to exceed five hundred dollars, or one year's imprisonment with hard labor." In case of the fine being assessed, the court is permitted to turn it wholly or in part to the wife. If the man is sent to the workhouse, fifty cents is paid each day for the support of his children.[2]

The Secretary of the California State Board of Charities and Correction writes:

> "In Los Angeles County family deserters are sent to a prison camp where they work on public roads. A dollar and a half a day is paid to the deserted family during the period of the man's imprisonment." [3]

One of the difficulties at present encountered by the courts in attempting to convict deserters has already been touched upon: the unwillingness of the wife to testify at the critical point. When she is confronted by the man her righteous indignation at his neglect often melts away and leaves her in a forgiving mood; or his actual presence may intimidate her. In either case she hesitates to testify to his hurt, and where she is the essential witness the prosecution may entirely break down.[4] The wife rarely derives personal satisfaction from her husband's punishment, however just the penalty may be; and frequently after the court has passed sentence upon the husband, she becomes the most earnest pleader for its mitigation. If, then, she knows that

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1. The Kansas City plan is to handle desertion as one of the phases of work of its Board of Public Welfare. A man guilty of abandonment is passed upon by the Board of Pardons and Paroles as is any other offender. The paroled man is given a written statement of the terms and conditions of his parole; if he violates it he is sent to the workhouse when caught for three times the unexpired term. He is required to make a weekly report to the Board, stating place or employment, residence, wages and detailed account of his expenses. Honest employment and respectable lodging are required. Mr. Jacob Billikof, of the United Jewish Charities of Kansas City, reports that at least 70 per cent have reported regularly and given satisfactory accounts of themselves. For a deserter, whenever it is desired, paying a certain amount of the weekly wage for family support may be made a condition of parole. *Proceedings of the National Conference of Jewish Charities,* 1910, p. 107.

2. Judge William DeLacy, "Operation of the Law in Washington, D. C.," *Proceedings of the Seventh Maryland Conference of Charities and Correction,* 1911, p. 99.

3. Letter, June 7, 1915.

4. This is one of the reasons advanced against the expense of extraditing deserters. All the time, trouble and expense may go for nothing where the wife simply by refusing to testify can stay the proceedings and give the court no choice but to release the offender, who may promptly abscond again.

This has led to the suggestion that in cases of desertion and non-support the wife be made a compellable witness. "If she can refuse to testify, thus making herself responsible to her husband for any trouble her evidence causes him, she may be afraid to give it, or if she does give it, may subject herself to ill treatment afterwards by him on account of it. If the law compels her to testify the husband has no reason to condemn her or to attempt to punish her for doing so. This makes it much easier to bring out the facts and secure conviction where it is deserved." Wm. H. Baldwin, *Family Desertion and Non-support Laws,* p. 29.

In seventeen states the wife is not a competent witness in desertion and non-support cases: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming. "She is a competent but not a compellable witness in the District of Columbia, Kansas, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and it is stated that in Connecticut her testimony, if offered, would not be refused. In all the other states, either by general provision or by the laws on this subject, she is a competent and compellable witness." *Ibid.*

(The Session Laws of Illinois for 1915, however, make the wife a competent but not a compellable witness.)

his punishment will not profit her in the way of making her support easier, but may make her lot harder by arousing his animosity against her, it is not strange that she may consider the advantage arising from his conviction as too small to justify the risk of appearing against him.

A treatment which will force the husband to contribute to his family's support even when in prison will make the wife less reluctant to give evidence necessary to the prosecution.

This advantage, however, is not the one of largest importance. The primary reason for having such a policy is the fact that under any circumstances where the husband is convicted of wilful desertion there is a guarantee that he shall contribute to the support of those dependent upon him. If such a policy is in force it will not often happen that, given his choice, a man will prefer to support his family as a convict rather than as a free man.

Oregon in 1907 passed a law providing that men guilty of non-support might be compelled to work on the public roads, and that the county court might pay not to exceed a dollar and a half for each day's labor. The same year Indiana and Maryland passed laws providing that "excess earnings" of non-supporters confined in the workhouse might be paid to the family; and Colorado specified the same year that county prisoners be required to work eight hours a day "when possible," and that from their earnings men in prison for non-support should have from fifty cents to one dollar a day paid to their families. Maine also made provision in 1907 for paying fifty cents a day to families of such prisoners, repealed the law in 1909 and re-enacted it in 1911. Under none of these does anything of consequence seem to have been paid. Michigan, Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Utah also have provisions along this line. Michigan and the District of Columbia have had a more successful experience in providing for families in this way than have any of the others cited.[1]

A pertinent query in connection with the treatment of deserters concerns the grade of the offense. Thirty-four states, with the District of Columbia, have made desertion or non-support a misdemeanor; the remaining fifteen have made it a felony.[2] The distinction is important, for where the crime ranks as a felony conviction leaves no choice as to the penalty: states imprisonment is prescribed.

States which have made desertion a felony have been moved to do so chiefly for the purpose of securing extradition, under the impression that extradition cannot be secured for an offense less than a felony.

> "As Mr. Baldwin, in his address before the National Conference of Charities and Corrections at Boston, June 10, 1911, proves, it is a mistaken impression. The Constitution of the United States in defining the extraditable person (Art. IV, Sec. 2) says: 'A person charged in any state with treason, felony *or other crime*,' etc. And this, as Mr. Baldwin points out,

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1. Wm. H. Baldwin, "Present Status of Family Desertion and Non-support Laws," pp. 29-31. Abstract appears in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, 1911, p. 406.

Judge W. N. Gemmill of the Chicago Municipal Court, and others, have pointed out a practical difficulty in carrying out a law to remunerate the families of convicts from the fruits of their prison labors—*viz.*, that in the present stage of prison industries often it is true that the prisoner does not produce enough to cover the actual expense which the state incurs in supporting him, and that consequently there is no surplus which could be devoted to the support of his family. Without pausing to comment upon the management of a system which has the full use of a man's time and is not able to make him self-supporting, able-bodied as he is, a question may be asked: Granted that the deserter's prison labor does not produce enough surplus to be of material assistance to his family, in what respect is the community better off economically if it must by means of charity assume the expense of the family's support?

2. *Misdemeanor:* Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, North Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming.—34.

Felony: California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, New York, Ohio, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin.—15.

was confirmed fifty years ago by a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States (24 Howard, U. S. 66) with reference to 'treason, felony or other crime' in the following language: 'The word crime of itself includes every offense from the highest to the lowest in the grade of offenses, and includes what are called *misdemeanors* as well as treason and felony.'

"Nothing more is needed to prove the extraditable character of misdemeanor but there is further proof of the most cogent kind: the fact that misdemeanants actually are, in many cases, extradited—moved from one state to another with facility and despatch.[1]

"The strongest reasons against making the offense a felony are in the first place, that the family has already been hard pushed by necessity occasioned by an indolent or reckless head, and to place him in prison is simply to aggravate the condition that led to the complaint against him. It is like fining the drunkard who has deprived his family of bread to supply himself with liquor; secondly, the case is usually begun in a lower court which has no power, and which often releases the defendant on mere promise of support, when there is no machinery to secure it; it is much more difficult to get a conviction in a felony case, and the result is that many who should fare otherwise go scot free of all responsibility." [2]

B—With Reference to the Abandoned Family.

The second phase of treatment has to do with the family which has been left behind. Since the record is rarely made of the desertion unless the family comes to want this is primarily a question of maintaining the family until the deserter can be located and induced to resume responsibility for its dependent members; or, in case he cannot be produced, until the family can be made self-supporting. This phase of treatment is one which usually falls to the charities.

If the expense of caring for deserted families were met from the public treasury the eyes of the law would be more widely opened to its evils, and possibly a more serious attempt would be made to deal with deserters. Self-interest would prompt the state to such a course. Unfortunately the government does not assume this burden in most communities—at least not in its entirety—and this makes it obligatory for private philanthropy to come to the rescue if aid is to be extended to all bona fide abandoned families. Probably the readiness with which private charity takes up the obligation partly accounts for the indifference of those in charge of public relief.

In a number of cities—New York, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Baltimore and Washington among others—public outdoor relief has been expressly done away with for dependents of all classes.[3] Where this is the case a deserted family that is really dependent has only one recourse unless it shall agree to be broken up entirely and to have its members cared for in institutions, *viz.*, to apply to private charity. In a number of states a Mothers' Pension Act sets aside from public funds an appropriation for the care of dependent mothers; but several of these states forbid to deserted mothers participation in the benefits of the act.[4]

The private charities in many cities, therefore, have the responsibility of

1. Mr. Baldwin's table of statistics in connection with the address mentioned shows that extraditions have taken place in at least fourteen states where desertion ranks as a misdemeanor, Illinois among them; and that "in New Jersey, where desertion is a misdemeanor, there is a higher proportion of extraditions in proportion to the population than in any jurisdiction in which the offense is a felony."

2. Editorial, *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology,* November, 1912.

3. E. T. Devine, *Principles of Relief,* Part III, Chap. ii. New York City, however, permits public outdoor relief to be given to the blind, and free distribution of coal in winter.

4. The Illinois' parents pension law, effective July 1, 1911, as amended June 30, 1913, and July 1, 1915, formerly applied to deserted mothers as well as to widows and women whose husbands are incapacitated; as amended it excludes deserted women whose husbands have been gone less than seven years, after which time they may be legally regarded as dead.

caring for deserted families literally thrust upon them, and so are confronted with the need of working out a definite policy of treatment. How the difficulty of the task may be increased by inadequate laws or by failure of the courts and public officials to cooperate has already been pointed out.

(a) ALL DESERTED WIVES AIDED WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION.

Many of the charities through lack of funds, lack of time, lack of sufficient office force, sometimes through lack of sufficient interest, have no definite desertion policy, a fact which some of them frankly admit. Burdened as they are with more work than they are able to do they find it impossible to work one out; nor are they equipped for carrying out other than the most simple plans should a policy be clearly outlined. All cases are taken as they come, relief being granted upon the basis of the needs of the applicant, with no difference in treatment because of different social status of the applicants. The majority of them, it would appear, do not even make provision for recording deserted wives as a separate class of applicants,[1] and certainly any method of treatment to be of value must first of all isolate its problem. Other societies which report having policies of dealing with deserted families state candidly that these policies exist only on paper for the most part, and that they find it difficult to carry out a thorough-going plan for dealing with desertion.

In brief, the working "policy" of such societies is to treat all deserted women as widows, dependent because of being deprived of male support and meriting charity without question because of the misfortune. It fails to distinguish the woman whose husband may be living from the woman whose husband is dead.

The New Haven Organized Charity Association writes:

> "Our society handles deserted wives in about the same way it handles widows. The money set aside for these cases is given to a visitor who distributes it as need arises and at the same time tries to find work for the women." [2]

The Portland (Maine) Associated Charities writes:

> "Our organization has, during, the past year, raised a special fund to be used in pensioning widows and deserted wives and young children, and the pension has been given to about the same number of both classes of dependents. We have endeavored to treat each case on its merits and I fear we have not arrived at a distinct policy with regard to relief in desertion cases." [3]

The St. Louis Provident Association writes:

> "We keep no separate account of expenditure for deserted wives and have no special method for dealing with them. They are in the same class with widows." [4]

Such a policy as this exposes the society to a host of impositions. A man may be tempted to desert in times of stress (who otherwise would not), if he knows his family will be cared for. It may seem easier to provide for his family by disappearing till the emergency is relieved by others than to remain and meet it face to face. If a society gets a reputation for caring for all who come, without concern for the husband other than to establish the fact that he is not living with his family, it may unwittingly serve to popularize both spurious and bona fide desertions in that community.

Again, such a policy does nothing toward drawing husband and wife together nor toward re-establishing normal domestic relations, when the society

1. *Vide*, p. 23.
2. Letter, February 27, 1915.
3. Letter, March 1, 1915.
4. Letter, February 26, 1915.

might be able to serve as an effective go-between, a peace-maker, an arbiter of domestic differences. As the courts of domestic relations repeatedly demonstrate, an intermediary is sometimes all that is required to make reconciliation possible. A plain duty is neglected if no attempt is made to serve in this capacity. Relief too easily given may only keep husband and wife apart by making their need of each other less.

(b) AID REFUSED TO ALL DESERTED WIVES.

At the other end of the scale may be found certain societies which refuse to grant aid to any deserted family which may apply. This is the plan advocated by Dr. Boris D. Bogen, and followed by the United Jewish Charities of Cincinnati. This society, without rendering any relief at all, simply refers deserted women to some organization which can advise as to the legal phases of the matter and so, apparently, washes its hands of responsibility for them altogether.[1] This very effectually checks any tendency to use desertion as an excuse to "sponge" on the organization, and it may discourage some men from deserting, particularly those of the "spurious" and the "intermittent husband" types. The objection to this policy is that it does not have any effect in bringing back to the family the deserter who has left home with the intention of making his desertion permanent; and it leaves unassisted cases of genuine suffering.

Between the two extremes indicated a variety of policies may be defined:

(c) BREAKING UP THE HOME.

Some societies maintain that only indoor relief should be given deserted families; that the husband by going away has forfeited all right to have his home kept together, and that if its members cannot keep it together unassisted they must be provided for in other ways than by outdoor relief. It is also held that a policy of breaking up the home will discourage desertion; that the husband will be less ready to go away on trivial or no provocation if he knows that he will have no home to which he can return.

The Minneapolis Associated Charities writes:

> "Theoretically the policy of the society regarding deserted wives is that the wife shall place such children as she cannot support unaided in an institution, and she herself shall keep with her one, two or more children, but only so many as her own efforts can maintain. Then if the husband returns it is distinctly his responsibility to re-establish the home which he has broken up by his desertion. Wherever this method has been tried, which has not been often, it has resulted usually in the return of the man. The objections to the plan are * * * the immediate hardships it puts upon the woman and children. Although in the long range those hardships are much less, if it succeeds in bringing back the husband, than in the continual anxieties of fast and loose method of periodic desertion." This plan, however, is modified by practical considerations of each case.[2]

The Cook County Juvenile Court, and those of several large cities, agree to care for dependent children in institutions in case the deserted mothers cannot maintain them alone. This is a modification of this particular form of treatment.

(d) RELIEF GRANTED ONLY ON CONDITION THAT THE WIFE SHALL AGREE TO PROSECUTE HER HUSBAND.

Because the wife is the person principally aggrieved and is also the most competent witness for the prosecution, the policy has been adopted by some societies of refusing to grant aid to a deserted woman unless she shall agree to take out a warrant and institute legal proceedings against her husband.

The Providence Society for Organizing Charity writes:

> "Our society insists in cases of desertion that before relief is given

1. *Proceedings of the National Conference of Jewish Charities*, 1910, pp. 57; 103.
2. Letter, February 26, 1915.

other than emergency aid the deserted wife should enter a complaint with the police." [1]

The New Orleans Charity Organization Society writes:

"While we may give temporary material aid until the case can be thoroughly investigated, we always insist on the deserted wife taking her case to the Juvenile Court and if she refuses to do this we drop the case until she does." [2]

The Federated Jewish Charities of Boston writes:

"Wife must file application with the National Desertion Bureau and take out a court warrant for arrest of deserter." [3]

The Federation of Jewish Charities of Louisville writes:

"When a deserted woman comes for aid we insist on her signing a warrant for the arrest of her husband should we be able to find him, and if the woman refuses to do so we do not extend aid." [4]

In many cases such a policy, rigidly carried out, would work an injustice upon his wife. If her affections for her husband are still enduring it will be painful in the extreme to take action against him, however much he may deserve it. If he is of a resentful or unkind nature such an aggressive movement on her part may stir him to hatred and cruel and abusive treatment of her by way of retaliation; she may be afraid to comply.

When efforts at persuading the man to return have been of no avail a society may fairly require as a condition of giving assistance that the wife *give her consent for some one else* to take out the warrant in case it does not seem expedient that she herself shall do so. Such a requirement would effectively check demands for aid from spurious cases, for the wife would not be willing to take out a warrant for a husband who had not really left her. It would also serve to discourage men from deserting who do so in order to give their families a better excuse for appealing to charity. After it becomes apparent that nothing less than legal action can be counted upon to secure the man's return, the society is accessory to his delinquency if it continues to aid the wife without obtaining her consent for a warrant to be secured. It is a co-partner with the wife in shielding him from the law, and is to that extent a contributor to his guilt.

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1. Letter, March 23, 1915.
2. Letter, February 27, 1915.
3. Letter, July 14, 1915.
4. Letter, May 28, 1915.

CHAPTER VII

Summary and Conclusion

Whatever else may have been conveyed by the foregoing pages it is hoped that two facts have been made clear: first, that family desertion is a problem of our society of sufficient importance to warrant the most serious consideration; second, that the consideration which it has received in the past has not been commensurate with that importance.

At least one-tenth of the poverty which compels the attention of organized charity is traceable directly to this cause. No measure is available of its cost in terms of broken homes, disintegrated family life, loss of character, and deficient development of children. That desertion has come to our attention so tardily is due to the fact that recognition of the home *as an institution* has been belated. That it is being studied now is due to the fact that it has come to impose a heavy economic burden upon the relief agencies of the country which is in great measure preventable, one which they cannot continue to bear without protest.

Desertion seems to grow out of human nature and the family situation itself, for it is apparently common to all mankind. It is found in all parts of the world, and has been known in all periods of history. No religion nor race is exempt from it. But that it flourishes in environments which especially make for instability of the family is undoubtedly true. Conditions particularly favorable to domestic disturbance are found in cities: the restraint of the *mores* is less there, because of the absence of primary group attachments; the size and mobility of the population makes for anonymity of the individual, who finds in the fact a greater freedom to do as he pleases; in the city the economic basis of family unity tends to disappear and life becomes intensely individualistic; and a general spirit of restlessness and discontent is prevalent. Family disintegration on an extensive scale is the result, and among the poorer classes especially this disintegration takes the form of desertion of families. In this the man is more commonly the offender, since tradition and children bind the wife to the home.

Society's interest is more direct in cases where the man deserts, since non-support is usually an accompaniment and the community must assume the burden of his dependents.

Measures for dealing with desertion are still in the experimental stage. Even yet comparatively few communities have worked out a thorough-going policy of treatment. For those which have not done so a policy is suggested:

A SUGGESTED POLICY OF TREATMENT.

i. A Record of Desertion Cases.

The first step for every agency to which desertion cases come is to make provision for recording deserted wives as a distinct class of applicants. The extent of the problem cannot be known otherwise, nor can proper treatment be applied.

The peculiar character of deserter makes it important to have a knowledge of other matters than those needful for the files in usual cases of destitution. The ordinary record blanks of the relief society are not suitable for recording this additional information. It is suggested that a special schedule be prepared for use in desertion cases in addition to the regular forms, upon which information pertaining particularly to the desertion can be tabulated. Some of the items especially valuable to record would be: date of present desertion; date and length of previous desertions; circumstances under which desertions occurred; circumstances under which the deserter returned each time previously; how the deserter spent the interval of absence; how the family main-

tained itself during those intervals, etc. Such records, if carefully prepared would constitute a helpful collection of material for the office to use in dealing with future cases, and a valuable body of information for further study and analysis of the problem.

ii. The Training of a Desertion Specialist.

It would be well for every relief agency which handles desertion cases to turn all such cases in to the same investigator so far as possible. If the amount of work from this particular type of dependency is sufficient to justify it one of the regular staff could be detailed as the desertion official for the office. The experience gained through repeated handling of cases of this character, and the continual concentration of thought upon them by the same person, would increasingly qualify him for this type of work and make him better able to deal with the question discriminatingly and effectively. In this way the agency would, without adding to the expenses of administration, develop an authority upon the subject, a "desertion specialist" of its own.[1]

iii. Separation of Spurious from Genuine Cases.

Is the case a bona fide desertion? This should be determined first of all. For its own protection the relief agency must be severely critical in cases of this sort. The desertion specialist of the office is the one to conduct all investigation; his experience and training will make him more able than anyone else to determine the authenticity of the claim.

iv. Efforts to Locate the Man.

If this is the man's first desertion, or if the situation in general seems to indicate a likelihood of reconciliation it is preferable that the organization undertake to locate him first rather than immediately to turn the case over to the authorities. This does not mean that private societies should seek to take the place of the police. Whenever they undertake to locate men who have deserted it should be clearly understood that they are doing so gratuitously and simply because it seems in that particular case that reconciliation is more likely to be effected by a private agency than by the police. Naturally the society can ill afford to add detective work to its other pressing duties; and it should not seek to relieve the police department of its proper responsibility.

When the deserter is found the society should employ all its powers of kindly persuasion to heal domestic differences and to effect reconciliation, provided, in view of all the circumstances, reconciliation rather than divorce seems more desirable, as ordinarily the great objective of the treatment of desertion is to re-establish the home. The deserter may be more kindly disposed toward his family and responsive to counsel if he is approached at first in a sympathetic and friendly way, rather than with threat of arrest and prosecution.

If, for any reason, reconciliation between the deserter and his family is impossible or inadvisable—and sometimes that is the case—he may still be persuaded to contribute to its support without the law being invoked to compel him to do so.[2]

v. "Interim Relief."

While efforts to locate the husband are going forward in the society temporary relief may be given the wife until the possibility of the husband's return shall be determined. This, it has been suggested, should be more sparingly given during the interim than in the case of widows, in the hope that when the condition of his family becomes known to the husband it may induce him to return with less delay.

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1. A plan similar to this was instituted in 1914 by the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. *Vide, The Survey,* December 19, 1914 (Editorial).

2. This, as Dr. Thomas J. Riley of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities remarks, may be effective for short periods of time, but is not likely to prove successful in the long run because the local organization has no legal hold on the man.

It is desirable that the status of the family with reference to the deserter be determined quickly and to that end the organization should work with what despatch it may in the effort to locate the man, so that the interim may be no longer than need be.

This "interim relief" is for the sole purpose of maintaining the family until the progress of events may determine a permanent policy; but even this should be granted the wife solely on the condition that she shall consent to the issuance of a warrant for his arrest in case it is found impossible to secure his acknowledgment of the domestic obligation in any other way than by prosecution. This does not mean necessarily that the law will be invoked, but that she is willing that it shall be when every other means fails.[1]

vi. Legal Proceedings Against the Man as a Last Resort.

If the efforts of the society to locate the man are of no avail, or if when found he cannot be persuaded to return, or if the character of the man is such that he cannot be depended upon to keep any agreement he may make as to caring for his family, his case should be turned over to the courts, there to be dealt with in a more compelling way.[2]

At this point it is of vital importance that the co-operation between public and private agencies shall be complete. It is extremely discouraging to the charities to push a case this far only to have an effectual solution fail to develop through inadequacy or indifference of the courts, the law, or their administrators.

Warrants should be issued as freely for deserters as for other criminals, and not be withheld because a man's address is unknown.

vii. Establishment of a Municipal Desertion Bureau.

The local machinery for locating, apprehending and returning deserters to jurisdiction, as it is at present operated, is highly defective. In communities where desertion is of an extent to justify it a Desertion Bureau, with full legal powers, should be established as an adjunct of the court, with an expert in charge and an adequate staff of carefully selected competent workers, for the purpose of doing this work effectively. A bureau is particularly desirable where courts of domestic relations are already established. Their reinforcement of each other would increase the effectiveness of both. The Jewish National Desertion Bureau affords a working model as well as an inspiration for the activities of such a municipal bureau. This department should be financed from public funds, with ample appropriation made for returning men who have fled to distant points and for carrying on all other work essential to its success. In the long run a generous appropriation for such a department would be justified as a public economy. The records of the Chicago Court of Domestic Relations and of the National Desertion Bureau are sufficient evidence upon this point.

viii. The Deserted Wife Who is Virtually a Widow.

On the books of practically all charitable societies there are cases of deserted women who are virtually widows. The desertion has taken place years ago and all hope of the husband's return has long since been abandoned. These are the "vanished husbands" whom it seems likely no effort will locate. For these cases, as Miss Zilpha D. Smith suggested in 1901, there seems no reason why treatment should differ from that accorded widows. Treatment of them must be in accord with the needs of the individual case, relief being given in the form of a mother's pension, institutional care, or regular outdoor relief, whichever the situation warrants.

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1. The question of who shall sign the warrant has already been discussed. (*Vide*, pp. 52, 53.) If it is taken out by the relief society or its agent, and there is danger that the wife shall not keep her agreement to testify to her husband's delinquency should it become necessary, the society may secure from her beforehand an affidavit to his neglect or abuse, or a written agreement to appear against him. This would probably not be acceptable as testimony in court, as over against her refusal to testify, but it would at least serve to put her in a position where she could less gracefully refuse to testify.

2. The policy to be followed has already been discussed in chap. vi.

A far deeper question than that of the *treatment* of desertion is that of its *prevention*. The social objective must be not merely one of rehabilitation of families which have been broken up, but the larger one of saving them from disintegration before it actually sets in. Except insofar as it may discourage other desertions any treatment of those which have already taken place is of necessity chiefly palliative; it leaves the roots of the infection still within the social system.

The family today, as never before, is being subjected to influences which are modifying it in vital ways. As a living organism it must change in order to adapt itself to the demands of the day and generation. Unfortunately various elements are entering into its readjustment which are causing it to fall as an object of esteem as an institution in the eyes of many persons. Because they hold it of such low value they treat its obligations lightly, and lay them aside almost at will. The problem, then, is one of raising the value of family and home in the estimation of those who have taken upon themselves the responsibilities which they involve. It is not enough to try to arouse in men a sense of duty which will hold them to homes which they would prefer to leave. It is not enough to perfect machinery which will compel men to shoulder domestic responsibilities which they wish to evade. Those things are important, but they are not solutions. The big undertaking is to implant in men and women a new scale of social values in which the home shall have first place.

Such an undertaking involves education, character building, the inculcation of high ideals of home life and of family importance in the individual. It also involves, in most cases, a raising of family standards and improvement of home conditions which surround the individual; and this in turn many times involves an improvement of economic conditions which shall make such improvement possible. If men and women are to *regard* the home as worth while it must be *made* worth while. We must not suppose that domestic unrest and this lowering of domestic values can be isolated and considered in their individual aspects alone. They are but symptoms of a deep-lying and fundamental disorganization which must be readjusted before they will disappear.

A community, therefore, must not depend upon its legal and charitable agencies, however efficient they may be, for a solution of its desertion problem. It must go behind the concrete outcroppings with which these specialized agencies deal, to the lives and homes of the people who compose it. Definite programs must be thoughtfully worked out, having as their objective the conservation of the home. It is not intended at this point to suggest such programs in detail. Doubtless the most important point of concentration is found in the youth of today who are to be tomorrow's home makers. Boys and girls should have brought to them systematically the implications of the family. Sex education should receive greater attention; the duties as well as the privileges of wedlock should be borne in upon them, and the sacredness of parenthood. School and church should conspire to eliminate any idea of marriage as a light or trivial thing. All forces at our disposal should be brought to bear to make them feel the supreme importance of the home in our social and moral life.

To this great task of social prophylaxis our urban communities, especially, must soon seriously address themselves. Any attempt to deal with desertion or any other phase of family disintegration which does not take into consideration the conditions which give it rise, is superficial and foredoomed to failure.

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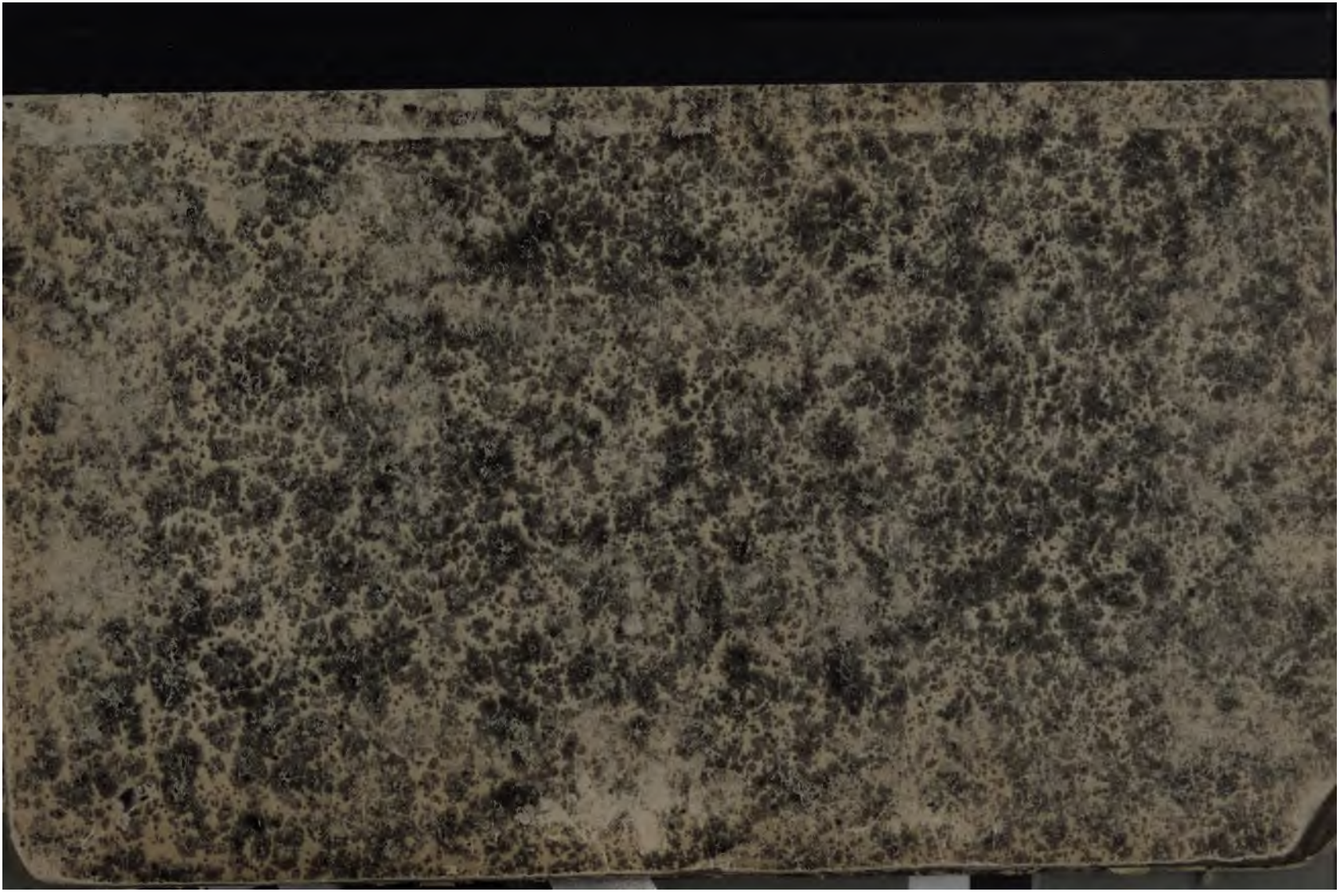
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